



PUNCH

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A DISPATCH from Monaco by Lord Kilbracken mentioned that Princess Grace's baby was expected hourly, and described how he followed her car along the Moyenne Corniche, got out when she got out of hers, followed when she walked, and ultimately caught up to say "May I wish you good luck on behalf of the *Daily Express*?" The editor is understood to have been pleased, but would have preferred his Lordship to have hung on and actually delivered the baby.

CHARIVARIA

the pound sterling, ending with verses beginning "Who'll kill inflation? 'I,' says John Bull" . . . though the last verse, starting "Who'll ring the bell? 'I,' says the Worker," is expected to confuse admirers of Lord Hailsham.



SOME idea of present nuclear sensibilities is given by the decision of leading yacht clubs to use signal-lights

"FIREWOMEN'S CLAIM TO BE PRESSED"
The Times

Human, after all.

NAVAL men, though familiar with dry, Admiralty humour, still feel that the decision to appoint, for the first time, a "Director-General Ships" comes at an oddly-chosen moment in the Service's history.

MR. MACLEOD, Minister of Labour, who went north of the border to see



what could be done about the 79,000 unemployed, the slowing industrial expansion and the complaints of lack of financial assistance from London, summed up his findings in a phrase which failed to restore complete confidence in Government by remote control: "Scotland must help herself."

GENERAL admiration will be felt for the Treasury leaflet on the troubles of

instead of starting-guns for this summer's regattas, so as "not to startle holiday visitors."

COLONEL SIMBOLON, rebel spokesman in Indonesia, failed to impress when he said of the Government troops, "If we cannot destroy them on the beaches we will fight them in the streets and in the hills"; he will do better when he learns to verify his references.

IT HAS been worrying for Conservative back-benchers to know that their private party meetings haven't been as private as they should be—but no more so than that their public meetings often aren't as public as they should be.

THE SURPRISING thing about the news that Gatwick Airport is to cost £1,200,000 more than the estimate is that anyone is surprised at it.

Discretion
Of Bank Rate's falling, more's the pity.
It's hardly safe to speak,
Lest Wilson turn upon the City
And Plummer smell a leak.



Punch Diary

HR.H. PRINCE PHILIP, who lunched at the Table last week, was only the second guest ever entertained there—the other was Mark Twain, in 1907—and the first to fall in with the Table custom of carving one's initials in its surface. He took time off in the middle of luncheon to incise a Greek Φ. The surface of the Table is deceptively hard, but Prince Philip, managing the difficult curved parts with considerable confidence, made a very neat incision with the blade of a clasp-knife, and then opened it up with that nameless tool with which Boy Scouts are supposed to take stones out of horses' hooves. The monogram is located midway between the initials of Douglas Jerrold and E. V. Lucas.

The Torrington Handicap

THE Torrington by-election nearly coinciding with the Grand National, a racing friend has summed up the prospects as follows:

With Socnatcon, Natconlab and Whigsoctory all scratched on account of the heavy going, the field for the Torrington Handicap is now reduced to three—Natlibcon, Lib, and Soc. Natlibcon, the favourite, won this race in 1950 and again in 1955, ridden on each occasion by G. Lambert. This year his jockey will be Royle, who knows the course inside-out. Soc, however, comes from a stable well in form, trainer Gaitskell having had a tremendous season. Despite his tendency to swerve to the left at fences, Soc came second here in 1955, finishing strongly only 9,321 lengths behind the winner in a two-horse race. He will again be partnered by L. Lamb, who will be out to reverse the '55 placings. His

connections are confident. The problem horse is gallant old Lib, once thought to have been retired to stud. Carrying bottom weight, he will be ridden by Bonham Carter, son of a famous lady jockey. Lib was beaten a good 9,539 lengths in this race in 1950, with Soc a further 854 lengths away third. On that form, and wearing blinkers, he should give both Soc and Natlibcon a hard race. I expect to see Soc follow Natlibcon home, or vice versa, but advise a "safer" on Lib.

Physician, Dose Thyself

IN the debate on the cost of the Health Service, the M.P. for Bark-ing justified the increase in the national drug bill by the extraordinary argument that G.P.s who see a large number of patients with the same disease might lose interest in their work unless they can try out new drugs. Presumably the jaded surgeon too is to be kept mad keen by being issued with a steady supply of all the latest lines in saws to experiment with. If, despite the increase in the expenditure on drugs, doctors still remain lack-lustre, perhaps they can be issued with capsules and not told what they contain, running sweepstakes among the partners on the results. If even that fails and the quality of the British Family Doctor falls steadily, one per cent of the anonymous capsules might be filled with the germs of obscure oriental diseases, thus carrying to its

logical conclusion the grim principle that medicine exists for the doctor, not the patient.

Slipstream of Kipling

THE words of the newly approved Ghana National Anthem, I read, "are taken from nine original entries in a national competition, with some additions by the Government's panel of judges." It is not clear whether the music has been written yet, but the scansion of the words suggests that at least nine hands would be needed for this too. The first line, "Lift high the flag of Ghana," runs comfortably to the tune of "The Church's One Foundation," but after that the pattern is obscure, and composers faced with "Come from the palm-lined shore, the broad northern plain," may feel uneasy about putting all those semiquavers into any military band score. An exercise on the lyric might be to identify the lines added by the Government's panel of judges. Government appointees on a job like this are apt to welcome a release into poesy, and become responsible for the worst lines. Of these the choice is large. "Your children sing with ancient minstrel lore" is well to the front; "We'll live and die for Ghana, Our land of hope for ages to come" presses close behind.

Tis an Elegant Story

THE TIMES reports that Americans of Irish descent were delighted by the launching of the latest satellite on St. Patrick's Day because the Navy "had driven the bugs out of the Vanguard" just as St. Patrick had driven the snakes out of Ireland. The detection of this historical analogy is likely to remain an unequalled triumph of the Irish imagination. If England launched a satellite on St. George's Day, the English would never be quoted as saying that, unlike St. George, the Ministry concerned had tamed the fire-breathing dragon instead of slaying it.



"N.S.P.C.C? Look, I happen to have failed my Eleven Plus . . ."

I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK

The first instalment of a new story by
ALAN HACKNEY
starts on page 431

I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK will be published in June by Gollancz, under the title PRIVATE LIFE
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PUNCH, March 26 1958

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WEIGHT OF PUBLIC OPINION

EAST IS WEST . . .

Discussion of the cold war and the menace of nuclear war is continued

THE ONLY TRUE FORMULA

By REBECCA WEST

THE H-bomb has done a great deal of damage without having been detonated. It has become an instrument of moral pretension and political fraud. Everyone who wants to establish himself as a noble-hearted prog, or a Tory who is holier than other Tories, or who wants to get into Parliament without a programme, makes capital out of the H-bomb. He suggests to the public that he does not want the H-bomb to go off, but that everybody else does. He, Mr. X or Mr. Y, the saviour of mankind, does not want half the race to be blown to fragments while another quarter dies of creeping sores, and the remaining quarter lives in horror because it has engendered monsters. But, he alleges, his opponents are eager for this to happen. Therefore revere Mr. X, vote for Mr. Y.

This is humbug. The opponents of Mr. X and Mr. Y are just as likely as anybody else to be killed or infected with disease or to suffer disgusting mutations if the H-bomb goes off. They therefore cannot wish this to happen. But they are probably honest men who admit that nuclear weapons set us a number of problems to which there is no clear answer. This is a universe which was not planned for consistency. Nature and history constantly present man with disharmonies which cannot be resolved in harmony. The H-bomb is one of these disharmonious phenomena.

An experience of mine makes me feel a particular horror at the idea of the explosion of the H-bomb. But at the same time I have to admit that among the inconsistencies presented by this lethal weapon is its obvious use as a force for peace and morality.

Warfare used to be grossly immoral in its sectionalism. The elderly among us can remember the days when Great Britain used to send out a professional

army, the bulk of which was recruited by poverty and misfortune, who fought and suffered and died, in jungle and desert and makeshift hospital, while the rest of the population sat at home and enjoyed the protection of their victories. When the first air-raid took place in the Balkan War of 1912 it gave the signal for an age of horror, but it put an end to that particular kind of immorality.

As soon as air warfare began no elector could ever vote for a war-hungry party with the idea that a professional army was going to take the consequences of his decision while he went scot-free. People were going to be killed and blinded and maimed, and there was no guarantee that he would not be among them. This obviously was a force which worked for peace. The guilt for the first world war was widely distributed, though in different degrees.

Germany and Austria were immediately responsible, but the warlike tendencies of other powers stimulated them to assume that responsibility. But the second world war was provoked by a single nation, and that nation Germany, which believed for mystical reasons that it would never be bombed.

The H-bomb has tightened the screw another turn, for it has made it still more certain that war-makers must endure the sufferings they cause. Simple souls will tell you with a knowing air that of course the great ones of the earth will have deep shelters which will save them from the explosion and the after-taint. It could be so. But when the kings and the statesmen come up to earth again where will they go and what will they do? Their

homes will be destroyed, their private fortunes will be valueless, there will be no company for them to keep.

Mr. Khrushchev is not the handsomest man in the world, but with these facts in mind it is a joy to contemplate his photograph. For this is not the face that would launch a thousand H-bombs, it is a face that would far rather be down at whatever is the Russian equivalent of "The Old Bull and Bush"; and how sensible that is. Mr. Khrushchev's desire to

survive will, heaven knows, have enough to do in contending with the vigorous attitude of the Soviet Union towards its leaders, and it is unlikely that he will go outside into the realm of international affairs to face such a very heavy hazard as the H-bomb. In fact we have at last reached the goal of which many military men have dreamed in the past, we have found a weapon so dangerous that it will make warfare impossible. It may well be that the great powers of the world may keep a few H-bombs in stock, never think of them, keep them dusted, and get on with the pleasant business of peaceful living, simply because the average leader of men, like Mr. Khrushchev, wants to go on living. True, this is not an invariable rule. The lunatic Hitler wanted to die; Stalin nearly lobbed a war at us from the bear-pit of his old age; some fool, and I have always wished I knew who it was, advised President Truman to drop the A-bomb on Hiroshima instead of arranging through a neutral power to get hold of some Japanese representatives and demonstrate the A-bomb on a desert tract; and two years ago we saw how a sick man in a position of power can misapprehend and miscalculate. But it is still a general rule, which has held good sufficiently to keep the Soviet Union and the United States from



fighting the war that has often seemed inevitable during the last twelve years.

H-bombs that do not go off may therefore be reckoned as useful instruments of peace. It is, unfortunately, arguable that H-bombs that may go off are also useful instruments of peace. There is now a much more marked inequality between the conventional armed forces at the disposal of the different European countries than there can have been since Roman days. No Western countries can afford to maintain armies, and very few of their inhabitants wish to be soldiers. The Soviet Union alone can divert what money it pleases to the maintenance of armies and can draft what proportion of its population it pleases to serve in them. All Western countries are therefore in danger of attack by the conventional armed forces of the Soviet Union, an attack which they cannot possibly meet by their own conventional armed forces.

The obvious riposte of the West is to declare that if it is subjected to attack by conventional armed forces it will meet it by defence with nuclear weapons; and this is the declared policy of the present Government. When we consider this solution of the problem we find ourselves swinging on a seesaw of argument which leaves us in the air. It is said that it would be criminal to defend a country from conquest by letting off an H-bomb, since this would mean wholesale death and the mutilation of our species. But the alternative is not peace but conquest by the Soviet Union, of which we have been given a number of uninviting samples. Roughly speaking, if one has not the special luck of Finland, it means violent death for many, imprisonment for many more, a police state, and clodhopping economic bungling which means hunger and decay. If a scale for the measure of anguish caused by international action could be constructed, with peace registering as 0 and nuclear warfare as 100, Soviet occupation would probably swing between 60 and 80. It would therefore seem wiser not to use the H-bomb.

But nuclear research makes it possible to conceive an H-bomb of limited effect which could be used as a tactical weapon and which would register

perhaps the same figures as Soviet occupation. However, an unlimited nuclear war might then break out; up we would go to 100. It would seem wise not to use the tactical weapon. But against this there is the possibility, the strong possibility, that unlimited nuclear war is so dangerous that nobody is going to start it. We would then go back to peace and 0.

Nobody would call this comfortable security. But where is security to be found? There is a school of thought which declares that we would never dare to explode the H-bomb, and that the Soviet Union knows this, and will call our bluff again and again till it has devoured all we have. It makes this declaration with complacent joy as if it had seen a special star of promise. But why? If what it says is true then we are doomed to be conquered by the Soviet Union and take our place at 60-80; and its declaration that we will never use the H-bomb destroys the one card in our hand which enables us to turn to our profit Mr. Khrushchev's desire to go on living, and get back to peace and 0.

Anybody who pretends to see an easy way out of this impasse must be a liar or a fool; and so too must anybody who pretends that the impasse is created by a group which wants to explode the H-bomb out of callous insensibility and blood-lust. Indeed, anybody who thinks that the H-bomb itself is the cause of our present insecurity disqualifies himself as a working sage. The H-bomb is simply one ugly factor in an ugly situation which exists independently of it, and would at this moment have taken a peculiarly unpleasing turn even if the thing had never been invented. There is a general principle behind our situation in relation to the Soviet Union. Democracies with a high standard of living and opportunities for independent thought do not want to fight, criticize budgets which make large appropriations for military purposes, and have low birth-rates. Totalitarian states with a low standard of living and supervised

thinking do not object to fighting, have to take their budgets as they come, and have a high birth-rate. The democratic West would necessarily be as vulnerable as a sitting rabbit at the present time, even if none but conventional weapons were in existence.

Again we find ourselves on a seesaw. Totalitarian states have a military advantage over democracies, and a totalitarian state is of course strengthened by military victory; but at the same time totalitarian states must tend to transform themselves into democracies, because survival is easier and life pleasanter in democracy. Mr. Khrushchev may rightly consider that the Soviet Union is in a more favourable position as a fighting power than Great Britain, but he must envy Mr. Macmillan his confident expectation of an end more peaceable than that enjoyed by Mr. Beria. These two phenomena, the external insecurity of democracies, the internal insecurity of totalitarian states, are the force and counterforce which have determined our recent past and will determine our future. The task before us as a democratic power is to show patience and keep our heads clear of rashness and rage, and to hang on until the totalitarian states transform themselves into democracies, and thereby lose their warlike spirit and adopt

the only true formula for peace, which is universal disarmament, adopted because people are sickened by war and will not be persuaded to turn from love and life and work.

That period of waiting need not be so long. Europe began to be disenchanted with war when victory was still victory; now that victory has so often proved indistinguishable from defeat, now that nuclear weapons threaten to merge both in a common slough of contamination, the competition between the pleasures of successful militarism and those of democratic life may be settled more quickly than seems possible. That we have passed through the last perilous few years without falling into a third world war must give us a certain confidence in the policies we have followed. But there is surely no benefit to be drawn from the kind of moralistic libels



we hear about the H-bomb to-day, which impute that somewhere there are people who want to explode it because it has not occurred to them that it inflicts hideous damage, or because they like the thought of that damage.

But I am perhaps prejudiced because my own aversion from the idea of letting off the H-bomb can be turned to picturesque moral account, for it has nothing to do with warfare. I wish, if summits are going to talk together, that peak would chat to peak not about nuclear weapons but about nuclear energy. The worst effects which we fear from the explosion of the H-bomb have already visited humanity, in the most pacific circumstances. Twenty-five years ago I knew two women who were going slowly and painfully to their deaths, one a Sister in a London hospital, the other a French woman

doctor, because they had handled radium before its lethal properties were recognized. The English nurse was one of the most beautiful people I have ever known, in character as in person. Since then time has constantly revealed that many contacts with radioactive material which used to be considered perfectly safe are hideously dangerous. To take a single instance, figures have been published showing that doctors now engaged in radiographical work have more than the normal rate of physically and mentally defective children. This is particularly alarming, since such doctors have long worn clothing which in the light of all available scientific knowledge was considered an adequate protection against the risk of mutation.

Are we certain that we are right in producing as much nuclear energy as we can, all over the world? Do we really

know enough to make us sure that we can control the process and the product? There are many questions which do not seem satisfactorily answered at the present date; and one of the most disturbing of these relates to the disposal of radioactive waste. I wonder if we can be quite sure that when we bury it below ground we are not honeycombing the earth with death, and when we sink it in the sea we are not preparing a vast brew of poison and doing something much worse than making the green one red, which was the highest they could put it in Macbeth. Of one such immersion it was candidly stated that the radioactive waste was enclosed in containers which would last a century: a period which seems much too short if one has any affection for the human race.

It might well be that a dispassionate survey of all the material relating to nuclear energy would lead to the decision to ration it. It might even be that man would have to choose between using the limited amount he was allowed to produce for pacific or for military purposes; and if man has to choose between war on the one hand and industrial power and the control of disease on the other it may be that he is sane enough to opt for prosperity and health rather than death. In that case the production of the H-bomb would be suspended. But in honesty it must be admitted that this would not give us the security for which we long. Even if there were no nuclear weapons the democracies would still find themselves faced with the danger of conventional warfare waged by a totalitarian power enjoying great military advantages. We are suffering now not because man is an inventor, which is one of his comparatively simpler roles, but because he is a political animal; and as that he is dealing with harder problems than are ever presented him by matter.



The views expressed in this series do not necessarily represent those of PUNCH. Other contributors will be:

Fr. TREVOR HUDDLESTON
ERIC LINKLATER
H. F. ELLIS
Dr. J. BRONOWSKI
LORD CHANDOS
ALISTAIR COOKE
D. ZASLAVSKI (of Krokodil)

Why Brill?

By H. F. ELLIS

IT is quite certain that I shall not be asked a single question by any of the British Railways officials who are now carrying out a survey on the London Midland, Eastern, North Eastern and Scottish Regions. These men are stumping up and down express trains all over the country, putting discreet questions to passengers, mainly "business-men and other regular travellers," to discover their needs and record their complaints, if any. That is well done, and I should be glad to hear that London Transport were similarly sending out officials to put discreet questions to bus users. But it would be even better done if there were any chance that the officials would put their questions to *me*. I would travel a great many miles to have that privilege. I would even be willing to try to look like a business-man. But all would be wasted. I am not the kind of man that gets polled. If I were to travel twice daily from Manchester to Glasgow and back, wearing a bowler hat and continuously noting down figures in the margins of a great sheaf of papers, not a soul would come near me or ask me so much as my mother's maiden name.

This is the railway's loss as well as mine. For they would like my answers. The kind of question that officials are discreetly putting is, so I read, "whether any of the present services are not quite convenient and, if additional trains are thought to be required, what would be convenient times?" I could answer that one in a moment.

"They are quite convenient, thank you," I should say.

The official would probe about a bit, I suppose, to make sure that I had carefully considered the matter.

"You don't feel, sir, that if the 9.30 a.m. Manchester to Glasgow left at a quarter past ten it might suit your convenience better?"

"No," I should say. "No. I am quite indifferent. Just let me know what time it starts, and I shall be there."

I picture him looking pleased, but a little baffled, a shade unbelieving as befits a man whose questions up to now have all been addressed to business-men.

"About additional trains, then," he would say briskly, making rotatory motions with his pencil above his

notebook. "Have you any particular preferences? How about slipping in an 11.30 to Euston, between the 9.35 a.m., and the—"

"You must make your own arrangements," I should reply. "There is no need for additional trains as far as I am concerned. I rarely make more than one journey a day in the same direction."

I should be just as accommodating when it came to complaints. "It can be assumed," says my newspaper, commenting on the railway survey, "that most of the business-men will mention time-keeping as one of their most important needs." It can indeed. No business-man yet born has ever missed an opportunity to stress the tightness of his schedule or the vital importance of his appointment in Birmingham. What a relief, then, it would be for the railway official if only he would have the sense to put his head into my compartment.

"Lateness?" I should cry. "My dear chap, it doesn't make a pennyworth of difference to me whether I get to Newcastle at 2.17 or 2.41. If the train slows down on the way, I assume it is to avoid running into something in front. I prefer it that way. Just bashing through regardless, to please a lot of fat first-class expense-account men, cuts no ice with me."

I should be no less reasonable and

understanding about paper towels and soot coming into sleepers and all the other fiddling little points that ill-conditioned travellers bring up against the railways. And after a while the official would relax and put away his notebook and say it was a pleasure to meet a real gentleman like me. Then I should tell him that on the contrary it was a pleasure to me to answer his questions and so help, in some small way, to save British Railways from being messed about by business-men. Would he, in return, answer one tiny question of my own?

"By all means," he would say. I don't see, after all that had passed between us, that he could possibly say otherwise.

"Why always brill?"

"Brill, sir?"

"Brill," I should say. "Brill is a flat fish, found off British and other European coasts. It belongs to the same genus as the turbot, from which it is distinguished by the absence of bony tubercles, by the different curve of the lateral line, and by reddish-brown spots on the upper side. Seldom exceeding eight pounds in weight—"

"You don't care for brill, sir?"

"That is not the point. It is true that the book from which I take my knowledge of the fish says that 'it lacks





the firmness and delicacy of turbot,' but please do not imagine that I make any complaint on those grounds. Firmness and delicacy are not essential qualities in the fish provided by British Railways; it is enough" (here I should make a little bow) "that we find them

in its officials. Indeed, I make no complaint on any grounds. I am simply curious. I want to know why brill is always served in dining-cars. It is not a fish that makes any great mark in, if I may put it so, the real world. I never see it at the fishmongers. It is never

brought to my table by my adoring womenfolk. In all my life, I think I can truly say, I never heard it loudly called for by business-men in restaurants. Yet it is a fact that, of the last eleven meals (excluding breakfast and tea) that I have consumed on British Railways, ten have included brill."

"We always endeavour——"

"Is it," I should continue, "a fish that is for some reason peculiarly suited to preparation in the necessarily small galleys of dining-cars? Has your organization, by a master stroke, bought up the entire landings of brill at British ports in perpetuity? Is this tubercle-free creature the perquisite of British Railways, after the manner of royal sturgeon? The problem has baffled me for years; and it is not one, you will agree, that can easily be put to a passing steward. Since, however, you were kind enough to question me about my needs——"

"The explanation," he would reply, "is a simple one. It is . . ."

Yes, but what is it? The worst of conversations that will never take place is that you always have to break off just before the end.

Fathers of Science—III

Avogadro's Law

(This thinker gave lectures at Vercelli and Turin. In 1811 he decreed that "under the same conditions of temperature and pressure equal volumes of all gases contain the same number of smallest particles or molecules, whether those particles consist of single atoms or are composed of two or more atoms of the same or different kinds.")

SOME talk of Alexander
And some of Bonaparte,
But let me state with candour
The promptings of my heart.

The chap who hoed the hard row
And brought the turnips in
Was Amadeo Avogadro,
The Conqueror of Turin.

While tyrants made the masses
Subservient to their rules
He messed around with gasses
He mugged up molecules.

The trumpets' loud reveille,
The throbble of the drums,
Disturbed not at Vercelli
His complicated sums.

Till on a golden morning
More fit for songs and love
He uttered without warning
The bold remarks above.

Stunned into silent wonder
And terrified amaze
His pupils heard the thunder
Of that victorious phrase.

But not for long. Soon pealing
From the enraptured youth
Came shouts that shook the ceiling
The Day was won for Truth.

Their pens, their ink, their folders
They cast in triumph down
They heaved him on their shoulders,
And chaired him through the town.*

"A pest on outworn sages,"
They cried with reverent awe,
"Eternal through the ages
Is AVOGADRO'S LAW.

What though our food be scanty
Our boots in dreadful state,
Eviva! and *Avanti*
Amadeo the Great!"

EVOE

*It seems a pity that no historical record of this scene has previously appeared in print.

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"Let Mr. Brooke worry until October—we needn't."

Report on Barmaids

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

She was undoubtedly attractive. Her form and features might have been a trailer for Eric Maschwitz's promised new look in TV entertainment. She was blonde, but not aggressively so, long-necked, creamy, engagingly insouciant. We all agreed that she was a vast improvement on Dora, the former barmaid at the "Brigadier Arms." Dora was surly. Dora wheezed on the glasses before polishing them, slumped change into puddles of beer, kept the wireless tuned to Radio Luxembourg, wore a damp blotchy apron, called everyone "dearie" wearily, and looked up at the clock every time she pulled a pint.

There were various opinions about the blonde's origins. Miller placed her as a student of London University (faculty of social science). Johnson thought he'd seen her before somewhere but couldn't remember whether his

brief encounter had involved the night ferry to Paris or an Espresso bar in Wardour Street. I felt certain only of the delicious air of mystery that surrounded her. She could have been a deb on the make, a public opinion snooper from a worried Conservative Central Office, or a Rank starlet on location.

"No, I'll get these," said Miller eagerly, as we drained our glasses. "My turn, I think."

From our table in the corner of the lounge bar we watched him march, erect as a guardsman, to his interview with the blonde, and we observed without real surprise that he was carrying the empties. There was laughter between them. He bought her a drink.

"She's a honey," he said as he returned with three gins and two tonics.

When my round came up I marched, erect as a guardsman, to the bar.

"Mustard?" she said brightly to the man in the lumber-jacket.

I waited. What delicacy of touch! What incredible poise! Using only the extreme tips of thumb and first finger she levered up the lid of a ham roll and effortlessly smeared (though smeared is a poor word for such an elegant gesture) the exposed film of meat with the back of a mustard spoon.

"Same again, sir?" the proprietor asked.

For a second I thought of denying the proposition, of stalling for time. "Yes, please," I said.

He assembled the drinks.

"Must be an enormous asset to a place like this, having a really attractive and efficient barmaid."

"Prefer 'em plain myself," said the proprietor. "Glamour causes trouble."

"Really?" I said. "You mean, the men get fresh?"

"No. The pretty ones are bad for trade. Your friend now, he just bought her a port. Don't like that. To-morrow when he wants a drink he'll go elsewhere. He'll think she expects him to treat her again. Can't afford it. Embarrassed. Skedaddles. Seen it happen too often."

"But the custom she must attract," I said.

"And repel," he said. "You don't get women, accompanied or otherwise, inviting comparisons with a beautiful barmaid. Women like dowdy barmaids."

"If I were ten years younger—" I began.

"And the money they cost!" he said. "Install a good looker and before you know where you are you're involved in structural alterations running into thousands. She doesn't like the dam' lay-out or lighting. Wants Formica, ruddy little lamps all over the place, flowers..."

He paused to slap my pound into the cash register.

"Oh, no," he said, "they're not content, the gorgeous ones, with a decent respectable pub. Got to have olives, little biscuits, cocktail onions always on the go. And when you complain they say you've no class and why not put your prices up. You see this floor? Five years ago it was a

comfortable worn lino. Then Madge came, a sultry Anita Ekberg type, and in three weeks we'd had the floor-boards ripped out and a thousand quids' worth of wood blocks and carpet put down. Still paying for it."

I finished my gin and absentmindedly started on Miller's.

"The good lookers attract a few fellows, admitted, but most men dislike 'em. I mean, most men only want someone to natter with for a few minutes, and they don't want to look like wolves on the make when they're merely discussing the weather. Old Harry, there, one of my regulars, hasn't said a word to her yet. Either he'll pluck up enough courage to mention his theory about breakfast cereals being radioactive or he'll go back to the 'Bell and Book' where they've got two plain barmaids."

"By the way," I said, taking a sip of Johnson's drink, "how's the missus's lumbago?"

"Lumbago!" he sneered. "She's

been out every night since this girl, Heather, came on the job. Pictures, dogs, pictures, dogs—every blessed night. Hasn't done a stroke in the bar."

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Johnson, with three gins, two tonics and a port before him, engaging the blonde in conversation. I caught the words "... much more bomb-conscious than men."

I turned and saw Miller striding, erect as a guardsman, to join Johnson at the bar.

"We had an argument," I said, "about this girl, about her background. Where does she come from?"

"You might well ask!" the proprietor said. "She's had the push from half the pubs in London in her time."

"And Dora," I said, "where's she?"

"Dora's gone up in the world," he said sorrowfully. "She's in sole control of the Apéritif Bar at the Ritz. But that was a week ago. She's probably moved on to Claridge's by now."

Plantation Medley

ALL up and down the whole creation
Sadly I roam,
Still hopin' for my education
Next to the white folks at home.

Gwine to read all night!
Gwine to write all day!
I'll spend my money on the white men's books
And learn as much as they.

I'm comin'! I'm comin'
And my head is bended low.
I hear their angel voices callin'
"Beat it, Joe."

Yet I went down South for to find me a school,
Singin' folly-wolly-faubus all the day.
'Cos I'm tired of feelin' an ignorant fool,
Singin' folly-wolly-faubus all the day.
So I smell? Fare thee well!
Have the Army clear my way!
My class in Louisiana
Went an' slugged me with a spanner
Singin' folly-wolly-faubus all the day.

Now, up and down my old plantation,
Sadly I roam,
Still dreamin' of my education
Next to the white folks at home.

PAUL DEHN



"Isn't this rather preaching to the converted?"



"We've come at the wrong time—there's a service starting."

At Lansdowne Road

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

UNCLE JAMES was a good Belfast Orangeman and only once in the year was he willing to set foot on the degraded territory of the Republic. That was to see an international at Lansdowne Road. He took up his place, standing behind the three rows of benches there that run along the touch-line. All is well in that position, so long as the sitters in front do not rise and obscure the view. Uncle James, unwilling to buy a seat, came instead armed with a copy of the *Sphere*. "It is not for the print that is in it at all," he explained, for his tastes were far from literary, "but there's nothing handier for the prodding of a backside," and he rolled it up tightly like a weapon to show how it would be used.

The game began. The Irish swept down towards the Scottish line, as the critics had prophesied, and it looked inevitable that they must score in a few minutes. The excited crowd rose from their seats as an Irish three-quarter made down towards the corner flag. On the benches in front of Uncle James was an enormous priest with a black hat and an accent that had come up from Tipperary. Uncle James lent forward and, tapping him gently on the shoulder with the end of the *Sphere*, said "Excuse me, Father, but I wonder if you and your friends would mind keeping your seats. Otherwise it is not possible for us behind to see the game."

The priest was not to be outdone in courtesy. "Why, sure, mister," he said,

and turning to his companions he commanded them: "Keep your seats, boys; we want the gentlemen behind to see the game, and in particular"—and here he doffed his hat with a low bow to Uncle James—"our friends from Northern Ireland. And maybe it would be easier for you to see the game," he added, "if I kept my hat off altogether," and he folded up his hat and sat down on it. "Take your hats off, boys," he ordered, "and shove them down your bottoms so that the gentlemen from Northern Ireland can see the game."

Then the game took an unexpected turn. Against all the run of the play the Scots broke away and Smith ran half the length of the field and scored a brilliant try. Before the crowd had

recovered from its surprise the Scots had scored again on the other side of the field, and the score was 6-nil against Ireland. "Nine bloody Papishes in the team," calculated Uncle James aloud and disgustedly, "and only six from Northern Ireland."

The priest looked round. He fished out his hat defiantly and replaced it on his head. He signed to his companions, who all did likewise.

Then the ball was kicked into touch up into the stand behind them. The

line-out was taken with a second ball, but just as the Irish had grabbed this ball and were opening up what looked like a break-away a spectator in a clerical collar foolishly threw back the first ball on to the field of play. The game was stopped and the line-out had to be taken again.

"Did yer see it?" shouted Uncle James. "Did yer ever see the like? A bloody priest, and he has robbed Ireland of the game."

"I'll thank yer to keep a civil tongue

in yer head when you speak of priests," said the priest. "The man that obstructed the game is no priest. Can you not see that he has a moustache on his face? I make no doubt at all that he is a Presbyterian minister."

"A Presbyterian minister?" screamed Uncle James in fury. "Do you think that a Presbyterian minister would have nothing better to do than to come down to Dublin to interrupt a football game?"

Peace of a sort was only preserved by another bystander who piped up. "My name is Hegarty," he said—he gave this as a title deed which would by itself prove the accuracy of his information—"my name is Hegarty and that man is a Scottish Episcopalian clergyman."

A sulky truce reigned. Half-time came, though with Scotland still leading 6-nil. "A bloody awful English referee," said Uncle James. "Now, now," said Hegarty, "it does no good at all to be abusing the referee—not but what he gave very extraordinary decisions."

The game started again and it was not long before a penalty was awarded to the Irish, straight in front of the goal-posts, and the Irish were able to bring the score against them up to 6-3. "A fair decision," said Uncle James. "That referee does right to keep a firm hold on the game," said the priest.

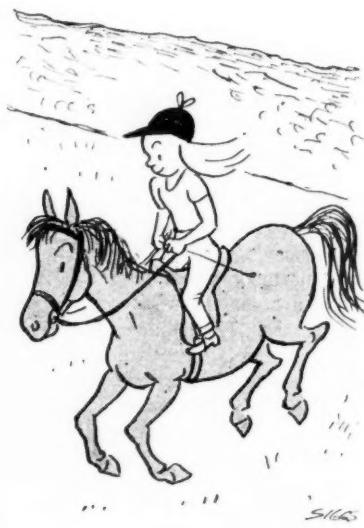
Then the Irish scored three times more and brought the score up to 12-6 in their favour. Uncle James unrolled his *Sphere*. "I'll not have a word said against any man's religion," he said. "I can see that that man was a Scottish Episcopalian," and indeed it was agreed on all sides that nothing was more probable than that the Scottish Episcopalian Church would send over a clergyman to inject a second ball on to the field at a critical moment in the match. The priest looked round and once more removed his hat. The game continued with the Irish holding on comfortably to their lead, until the whistle blew, leaving them victors.

"It's been a pleasure to meet you, mister," said the priest, holding out his hand to Uncle James.

"Indeed it has," said Uncle James, "though there are some things about your Church that I don't quite understand."

"It was a good game in the second half," said the priest.

"Indeed it was," said Uncle James, and the two shook hands.



Her Heart's Desire

By MARJORIE RIDDELL

DEAR MAGNOLIA MARSH,—A month ago when I wasn't getting anywhere with my boy friend, Herb, I used that shampoo that makes you dangerous to be near and my word it works I can tell you. Not only did Herb ask me to marry him, but I got another boy too.

So now I have a Problem I didn't have when I was dry and stringy and I'd be ever so grateful if you could help me.

The new one I got when I turned dangerous is called Paul Withington-Pirbright. He owns three hotels, some companies that make aeroplanes and cars, ten racehorses, a flat in the West End, a house in the country, a villa at Monte Carlo, and four cars.

Herb is a cast-iron-soft-topped-angle-squarer, and if I marry him we'll live with his mother and father and grandfather and two brothers and their wives and families until we've saved enough money to buy a house. We'll be able to save seven shillings and sixpence a week.

My Problem is: which one should I marry? Yours tremulously

DAISY DOUGHEAD

Dear Daisy,—My dear, if you are one of our regular readers you must already, in your own heart, know the answer to your Problem. You must be familiar with our Recipe for Living. RICHES DO NOT A HAPPY MARRIAGE MAKE, NOR WEALTH A HAPPY WIFE.

Doubtless you remember Pamelina, in "Her Nuclear Lover," who was tricked by his wealth into marrying an American millionaire only to discover that he expected her to dress up every day in mink and diamonds and wouldn't even let her darn his socks. Do you remember how he gave her a diamond tiara for Christmas instead of that exciting new frying-pan cleaner in its thrilling gift-wrapping she'd set her heart on?

There was a happy ending eventually, of course, because it turned out he was married already, so his marriage to Pamelina wasn't legal. Then she was able to marry loyal Les after all, who forgave her for marrying a bigamist and had loyally saved up all his socks for her.

But real life isn't always like that,

Daisy. If you marry this Paul Withington-Pirbright you cannot rely on his turning out to be a bigamist.

You must learn to face the realities of life. You must choose now, and choose well. Choose Herb. Life with an honest cast-iron-soft-topped-angle-squarer is much more likely to be realistic than that with a millionaire.

Yours very sincerely
MAGNOLIA MARSH

Dear Magnolia Marsh,—Thank you ever so much for your nice letter, and I think what you say is right, but the trouble is I am *in love* with Paul Withington-Pirbright.

Yours in despair
DAISY DOUGHEAD

Dear Daisy,—My dear, but you are *not* in love with Paul Withington-Pirbright. You only *think* you are.

Don't you remember Nellie in "Her Splintered Love"? For seventeen years of married life Nellie spent all her time cooking, washing, cleaning, ironing, darning, dusting, scrubbing, scouring, knitting, bleaching, mending, polishing, patching, saving up for a gas-poker and being beaten by her husband. Then she met Clyve, and they fell in love, and she was going to leave Ern when just in the nick of time she realized that Clyve was a shipping magnate and therefore it was her Destiny as a Woman to be True to Ern after all and Hard Work is its Own Reward, and a Woman's Only True Fulfilment as well. She just *thought* she was in love with Clyve and you will find the same thing. Believe me, Herb is the boy for you.

Yours very sincerely
MAGNOLIA MARSH

Dear Magnolia Marsh,—I want to write and thank you for giving me the good advice you did a few months ago.

I married Herb last week, and we are going to be very happy. We are going to start saving for our house as soon as we have finished saving for our honeymoon, and already I have done more cleaning and mending than I had ever dreamed of.

Thank you ever so much for helping me to find my True self and not yearn for glamour just because it was handed

to me on a plate like a silly immature girl.

Yours gratefully
DAISY BLOTBRANE

Dear Daisy,—Bless you, my dear.

You have no need to thank me. I was happy to advise you, to help you to spurn the gilded luxury that, in my experience, is so rarely a genuine substitute for a life of Work and Duty. I was delighted to be given such an opportunity.

Yours very sincerely
MAGNOLIA WITHINGTON-PIRBRIGHT



"Most magazines and periodicals, when they have found what they think their readers like, continue to provide much the same sort of fare in issue after issue. Seldom do they depart from established custom and tradition."

An exception to the rule is *Punch*, which recently has been branching out in all sorts of unexpected directions. Latest development is a series of serious articles on modern problems by noted contributors.

These include Dr. J. Bronowski, Father Trevor Huddleston, Alan Bullock, Eric Linklater, J. B. Priestley and Rebecca West. The series starts next week.

It is worth noting, too, that *Picturegoer* next week is coming out with a beauty offer—two tubes of mascara, with brush, at a bargain price."—National Newsagent

Now you're talking.



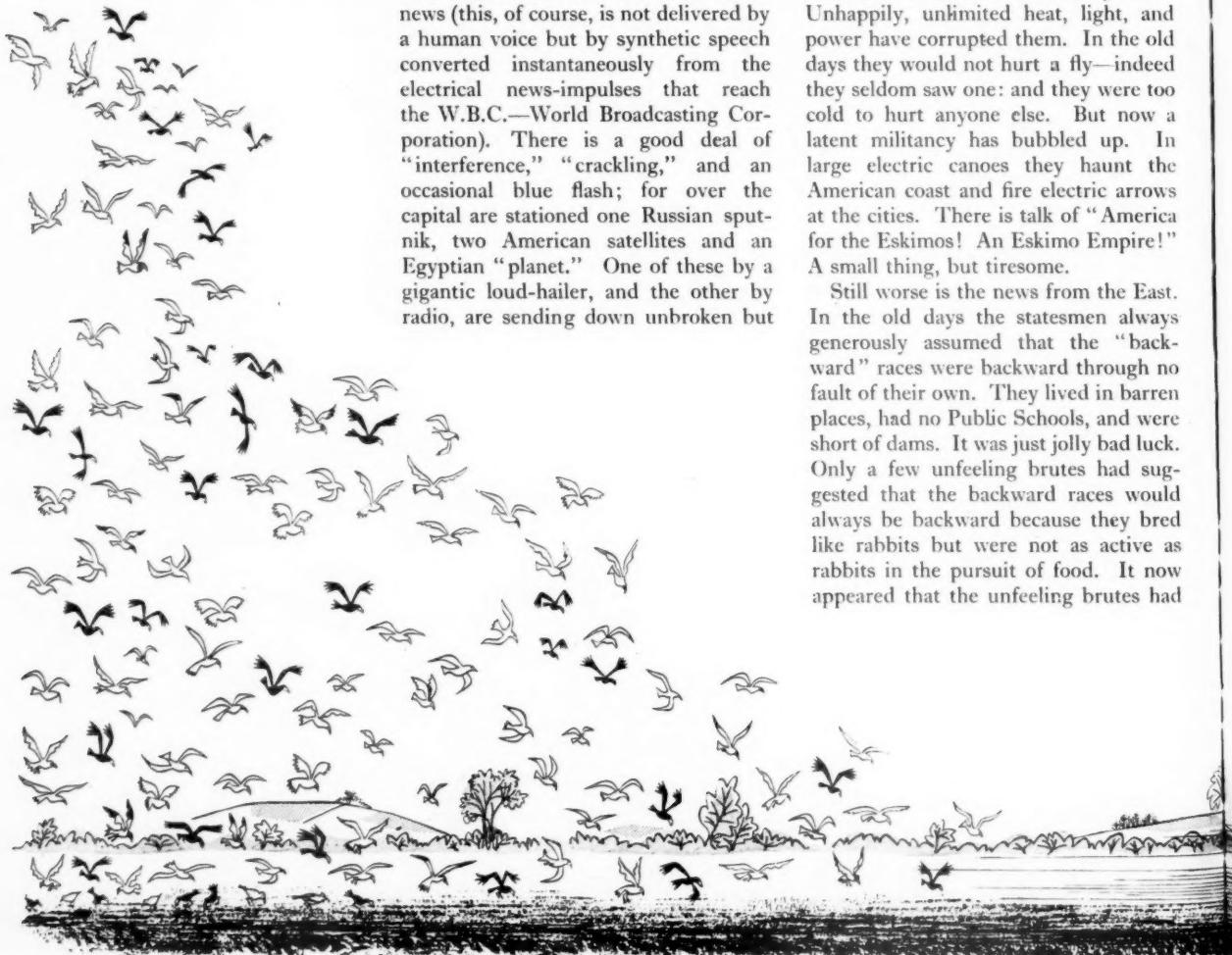
"As I see it the Liberals can't possibly form a Government—so I can vote for them with a clear conscience."

After Alpha

By A. P. H.

M R. NEVIL SHUTE began it with that grim masterpiece *On the Beach*: and there have been other *After the Bomb* books. No one, I think, has written an *After Zeta* story. I have myself begun a sketch, but I found it so depressing that I could not go on. Here are some notes, though, in case some movie-man would like to buy the thing.

The situation is roughly this. The sagacious and resolute statesmen of the West were right, after all. No one ever dropped a hydrogen, cobalt, topaz or geranium bomb, or fired a single rocket of that kind. All the nations put all their nuclear efforts into Zeta—or rather into Alpha, a much cheaper and better



method, which was invented by a junior clerk at Harwell and pinched by the Russians next day. Alpha has been in full force for twenty years and feeds the Earth with "unlimited energy." All over England there are vast and silent power stations, self-running, self-lubricating, distributing without the aid of man as much electric power as anybody wants. They are unmanned. Nobody is there. They are not even guarded: a trespasser would be automatically fried. Almost everything is automatic. Degrading toil has practically ceased. The Four-Hour Week has just come in; and very few do that.

The Prime Minister of this happy land, at old-fashioned No. 10, is shaving with his electric razor. He listens to the news (this, of course, is not delivered by a human voice but by synthetic speech converted instantaneously from the electrical news-impulses that reach the W.B.C.—World Broadcasting Corporation). There is a good deal of "interference," "crackling," and an occasional blue flash; for over the capital are stationed one Russian sputnik, two American satellites and an Egyptian "planet." One of these by a gigantic loud-hailer, and the other by radio, are sending down unbroken but

discordant streams of propaganda, advertisement and entertainment. All the sky-shouters, of course, are fuelled continuously by cosmic rays and are too powerful to be "jammed." In fact life is pretty fair hell.

What news does come through clearly is not, the Prime Minister thinks, much better than it was in the Bad Old Days. Many things have happened which were not imagined when Zeta, and Alpha, were acclaimed as the beginning of the earthly Paradise. For example, the Lapps and Eskimos, like everyone else, have unlimited energy, heat, and light. They have left their igloos and mud-huts and live in enormous concrete tenements with central heating. Over them hangs their own little Eskimo sputnik, which, through the Globe-wide Sputnik Network, gives them the latest information and entertainment from everywhere. Unhappily, unlimited heat, light, and power have corrupted them. In the old days they would not hurt a fly—indeed they seldom saw one: and they were too cold to hurt anyone else. But now a latent militancy has bubbled up. In large electric canoes they haunt the American coast and fire electric arrows at the cities. There is talk of "America for the Eskimos! An Eskimo Empire!" A small thing, but tiresome.

Still worse is the news from the East. In the old days the statesmen always generously assumed that the "backward" races were backward through no fault of their own. They lived in barren places, had no Public Schools, and were short of dams. It was just jolly bad luck. Only a few unfeeling brutes had suggested that the backward races would always be backward because they bred like rabbits but were not as active as rabbits in the pursuit of food. It now appeared that the unfeeling brutes had

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something. Few of the backward brown needed more heat than they had already. Alpha could not bring water where there was no water, or make cultivable soil of sand. But it gave the backwards eternal radio and, above all, the refrigerator. This magical contrivance became a god in many tribes: but after the first fine rapture it had disastrous results. Tribes whose numbers had been kept reasonably low by starvation and food-poisoning lowered the death-rate and multiplied exceedingly. But they did not grow, or kill, more food. They grew rather less. For one thing, they listened to the radio all day, and for another, a superstition had grown up that the refrigerator, properly worshipped, could make food as well as preserve it. So malnutrition and "underprivilege" returned: and, goaded by the radio, they threw jealous eyes at the white men, who were still growing a lot of food, though not so much. The League of Brown Men (led by a grandson of Colonel Nasser) talked openly of marching on Europe. Russia was afraid of China: and she, like all the European Powers, had her rockets ready still. Not merely the Yellow but the Brown Peril was a real fear at last.

At home the news was not much better. There was still much work that could not be done by the machines—type-setting, proof-reading, brick-laying and leading articles. But with "unlimited energy" on tap, few were ready to spend much of their own. Where continuous human toil was unavoidable the Four-Hour Week made necessary a multitude of shifts. The result was that few jobs were finished efficiently. Ten or eleven men were required to compose a single leading article, and thousands to get it printed. Not surprisingly, only two newspapers



"Circling round the earth, boys, at a speed of 19,000 miles per hour at a height of anything from 400 to 2,500 miles . . .".

were still in production. It had been hoped that the Age of Alpha would be the Age of Culture when all the population would at last have time to read the masterpieces of the world. But, for the reasons mentioned already, no new books were being printed. Nor were the old books read very much, for reading was regarded as an unnecessary expenditure of energy. But television and the radio, manned by millions of men, were running continuously night and day. The agricultural workers resented the idleness of the towns, and were growing less food, like the brown men. But the population was increasing madly.

On the other hand, in some parts there was the Revolt Against Leisure. The sons and grandsons of the former

miners were clamouring to be sent down the pits. At the moment, the Prime Minister heard with dismay, 30,000 angry Welshmen were marching on London. Just then there was a blinding flash, the wireless stopped, and his razor ceased to work.

"That will be Albert," said his Monday butler. Albert was one of the Forty-Two Men who for four hours each stood by the Master-Switch. If ever the Big Rocket in Hyde Park had to be discharged at Umbobo (the League of Brown Men's headquarters in Africa) the whole of Alpha's powers would have to be concentrated on the effort. From time to time an official test was made, after due warning. Albert, an individualist, insisted on having a test of his own whenever he came on duty: and no one could tell when he would turn the power on again.

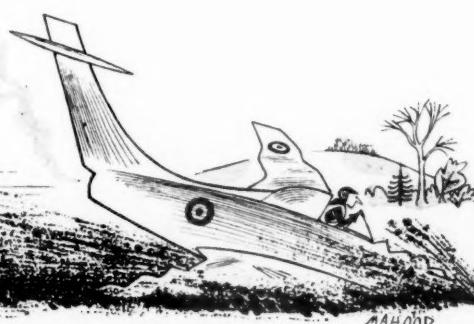
"What an irritating man!" said the Prime Minister.

That is as far as I have got.
(Copyright, of course, you chaps.)

2 2

"HONEYMOON PARADISE.—Lovely Cornish Country House with private beach. Bluebell woods sweeping down to the sea. Many beautiful rooms with private bathroom. Few vacancies March, April and May. Unique for Spring Holiday. Children of all ages welcome."—*The Times*

Let's wait, darling.



Psycho at the Wheel

By RUSSELL BROCKBANK

IN a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian* appeared an article entitled "Some Motoring Dilemmas." As it was signed "A Medical Psychologist" I settled down with more than usual interest, expecting at last some authoritative writing on the Car as a Class Symbol, Horsepower Drunks, and such. The article was cast in the Question-and-Answer form one expects from psychologists, but at once I saw that something was wrong: there were no answers. This lapse was not surprising as, judging by the questions, the writer must have been a very worried Medical Psychologist. Anyway, it was not difficult to reconstruct the original interview:

Q. How does one signify one's intention to pass the car in front? A trafficator or extended arm means "I am going to turn right"; and if there is a side-turning somewhere near this can be most misleading to approaching traffic.

A. If there's a side-turning at such a time, just wait till it has gone by, give the bloke ahead a blast, pull out aggressively so that anyone behind knows after you he's first, and scream past in third cog. O.K.?

Q. Which of two lanes should be taken when approaching traffic lights at a busy junction if the intention is to go straight ahead? If filtering is allowed one would block the nearside lane, but the outside one may be held up by cars wishing to turn right.

A. Keep out of the filterer's way—life is short enough as it is—and just *wait* until people ahead have turned right.



Q. Busy pedestrian crossings present another set of problems. Should you push through after, say, an arbitrary period of a minute, and if so what are your rights? Or should you hold up traffic indefinitely, sticking to the letter of the law?

A. You try sitting there indefinitely and you'll hear something to your interest from behind. You will be helped over the crossing even if your handbrake is on at the time. The proper drill is to edge forward all the time, slipping the clutch so that the engine roars. If, as I suspect, you're wearing L plates (legal, anyway) pedestrians won't linger.

Q. Then there are roundabouts . . .

A. Oh, lord. You mean which lane and so on. The best answer for *you*, sir, is to drive a large pre-war car with real bumpers. If you're near Windsor keep to hell off the hydrangeas.

Q. What about the right way to park into a vacant space in a busy street? "If entered forwards," my notes on this question say, "it will be difficult to get the car close to the kerb, but if one pulls ahead with the intention of reversing in, the flow of traffic will be impeded and the space will probably be blocked."

A. Bundle your way in backwards, regardless. The sooner you are in the sooner the *musique concrète* will die away. Let two or three cars pass before you open your door for another spot of flow-impeding.

Q. At a large city junction—for example Hyde Park Corner—how does a stranger know which lane to take?

A. What makes you think the natives know either?

Q. How does one "thank" a lorry driver—by flicking the tail-light? In an ordinary car this plunges everything in darkness.

A. As you have almost certainly passed him when he had signalled that it was unsafe, stand by for several million candlepower in the back of your neck, with *son* added to *lumière* for good measure.

Q. How do you inform an approaching vehicle that his spotlight is dazzling?



The usual flick of the headlights commonly causes him to add two more lights—undipped.

A. Be prepared, chum. First let him have your spotlight and when he retaliates by giving you both undipped heads, do likewise. Neither of you will see a damn thing, but honour will be satisfied (unless one of you has a decent pair of 1938 P.100s).

Q. Now, maintenance . . .

A. The best thing for *you*, chum, is to buy a new car every year and leave a trail of neglected hulks for other people to mend. You may never meet them.

Q. Oh well, one last question. Where in England do you get a light meal appropriate to travelling, not a seven-course dinner at a correspondingly high price, and not in the glare and noise of the snack-bar?

A. The trouble with you, mate, is that you've got a phobia about the whole thing. Why don't you stay at home?

It must have been something like that, and then the psychologist became so worried about his worrying about motoring that he forgot to include the answers in his MS. Unless, of course, the whole series of questions was cunningly designed to induce in the psychologist's fellow-motorists a state of traumatic trance, so that he can safely crash lights, overtake without warning, blind across zebras, take roundabouts at fifty, park sideways and blare past lorries round Hyde Park Corner with his lights undipped in a rackete pre-war racer after a huge meal, in time to get to his consulting room where, presumably, he is kept pretty busy by pedestrians.

Playboy's Lay-by

By LESLIE MARSH

S.U.S. ½ Mile Ahead: Slow Down and Straighten Steering" the road sign might read, in Russian, for it is Russia, land of the many inventions—the verst, the troika, the balalaika, to name but a few—which has vouchsafed the boon of Sobering Up Stations. To these hospices people who have had too much to drink are brought for a bath, coffee and a rest, and no proceedings are brought against them, though now *Pravda*, in a nasty self-righteous spirit, urges that guests treated there should be reported to their employers. Too many smug jingoes have mocked the Russian inventive genius; one does not have to rise as high as Dean of Canterbury to give praise where it is due for this innovation.

A calculated risk that the station commissioners must have faced is the abuse of this privilege by those looking for a cheap lodging. Many a lated traveller, sober as a treason trial judge, may well spur apace to gain this timely inn. Nor can it be difficult to carry off the masquerade. Without being a Leslie Henson any handy member of the Smolensk Beet Collective Amateur Dramatic, even if only used to itsy-bitsy work in *The Brothers Karamazoff* or *The Siberian Girl*, can muster up enough stagecraft to do a convincing drunk for a few minutes, comfortably fuddling the local tongue-twister test equivalent of "Soviet Sputniks Circumnavigate the Sphere Smoothly" and treating the dotted chalk line as haphazardly as a reconnaissance pilot does the sky frontier.

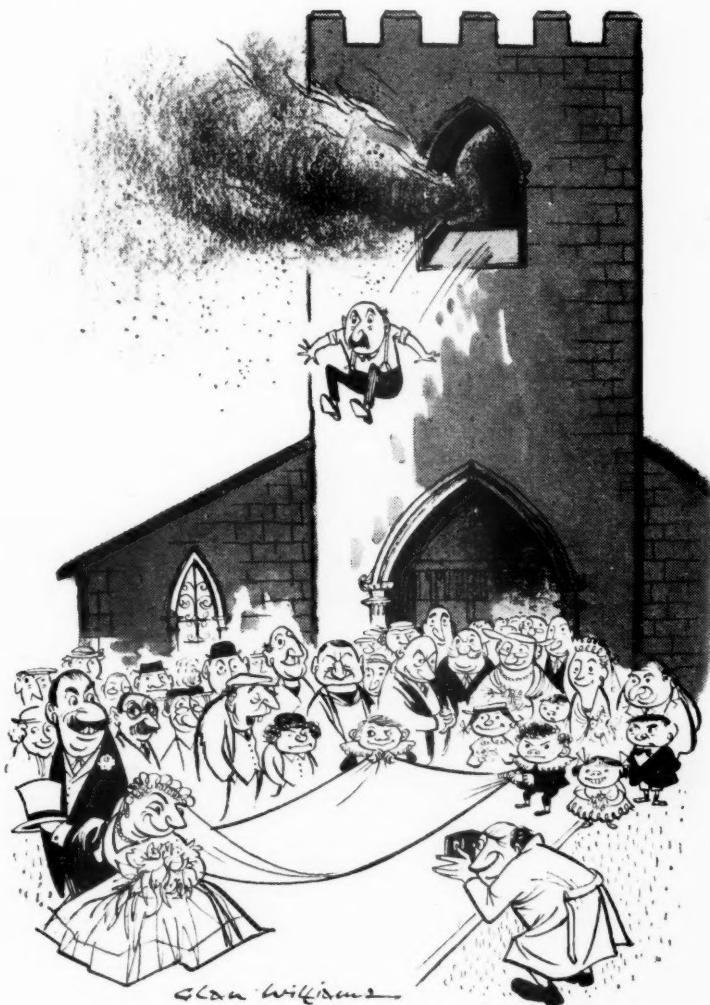
There is also the disingenuous pleader to consider, the sort of man who in this country, when found singing "We Are Fred Karno's Army" at 2 a.m. on the lawn of a rural deanery, explains that he had had only one light ale and a cherry brandy but that he suffered from an old war wound, had met a few friends, and was always emotionally disturbed on the anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille. This plea in reverse no doubt argues that the suspectedly sober soberer-up gatecrashing a free sanctuary was in fact uproariously incapable and that his deceptively staid manner was due to a habit of preternatural solemnity, the result of searing experiences when young, causing his few undertaker friends to

whom he was always prophesying doom to nickname him "Sorrow To-morrow."

Apart from these strictly sober spongers, borderline cases must have arisen. Young Embassy underlings, though not enjoying their seasoned chiefs' diplomatic immunity to summit-scale vodka-party consequences, can usually steer a fairly safe and straight course home, but the sudden tingle of snow-whipped air can produce a qualm or two, if not a queaze, enough anyhow to make coffee, bath and bed look a more inviting proposition than hurrying on to the waiting womenfolk. Some reasonably rigorous need test is almost certainly applied before admission, but clearly the screening has not kept out

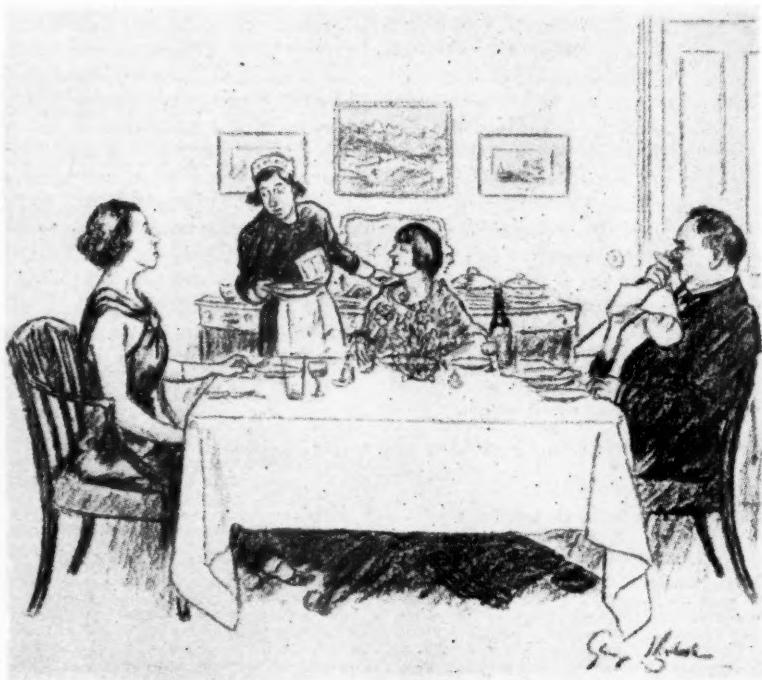
all the bogus applicants; hence the *Pravda* cry for a "We'll tell on you" campaign.

Here is another field, like nuclear-powered submarines, in which Russia's experience in ironing out the teething troubles will give her a long lead over imitators. It could even be a factor in the cold war. Lavish aid for underdeveloped have-nots has proved the best propaganda for the Soviet way of life. The free export, with know-how, of sobering up stations to teeming Asians and Africans bearing with patient fortitude their sake and arrack hangovers, with never a go-down or kraal to sleep them off in, will do more to convince many a wavering democrat than a season of British Council touring ballet and poetry recitals, or even a consignment of reeking tubes and iron shards, Mark 1.



CHESTNUT GROVE

George Belcher, R.A., contributed over a thousand drawings to PUNCH between 1906 and 1941



The Temporary. "PLEASE 'M ARE YOU GENTRY, OR DO YOU STACK?"

Cross Country

A RUNNER came out of the mist, tired but well-placed.
Six miles of country, with patches of standing water
And the odd churned-up gateway, had managed to baste
His limbs with England. Watching him in distaste,
"Dirty man!" said my daughter.

He squelched through the gate, cheeks blotchy, spectacles smeared
With sweat, his breath harsh spasms of inhalation,
And three miles still to go. More runners appeared.
"Dirty shoes! Dirty pants! Dirty knees! Dirty men!" she declared
In general condemnation.

On the other side of the gate, in a dog-tooth cap,
Silk muffler and raglan coat, stood, warm and jolly,
A club official who urged his men through the gap
In soldierly tones: "Come on! Well run, old chap!
Run up! Come on, the Poly!"

He stroked his moustache. Then, dodging a muddy squirt, he
Cried to a runner whose bolt was almost shot
"Boy, you make me ashamed of myself! Keep going, Bertie!"
"Dirty legs!" said my daughter, but didn't see what a dirty
Look that official got.

PETER DICKINSON

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LETTERS

(Letters addressed to the Editor, unless specifically marked otherwise, may be considered for publication.)

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Mr. J. B. Priestley and those who think as he does are not the only people who "want to go on enjoying their wives or husbands" etc. It is precisely for these reasons that many citizens (I hope and believe the majority) support the Government in their determination not to throw away the weapon which is our only safeguard against forcible occupation and enslavement. Mr. Priestley's "vast militia" would not be much use, any more than would Commander King-Hall's passive resisters.

Wadhurst, Sussex G. L. VIVIAN

BIRTH AND SLUMP

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—I note with some dismay that the thinking of "Slicker" in his recent City article concerning the American "recession" exactly parallels that of a majority of prominent American business men. In my opinion, this thinking is largely of the wishful variety.

It holds that if India's population, for instance, keeps on growing beyond the optimum increasingly dire poverty for India will be the inevitable result, whereas if America's population does the same thing only prosperity can result. I don't get it. Come over here some time and take a look at the "teeming millions" in our urban and rural slums. If Lord Keynes ever said that the only thing wrong with these people is that "their appetites are weaker than their opportunities" he was an ass.

Your T. R. Malthus was the first to point out that all populations everywhere are constantly growing beyond the existing number of means of obtaining livelihoods, and that this basic and universal cause of poverty (i.e. depression) can never be cured anywhere until the human race finds some means to control the increase of its own members. I'll back Malthus against Keynes and the business-men any day.

Paoli, Penn. JOHN A. RITTER

THE FIRST ZIP

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Alison Adburgham tells us that the zip came to England immediately after the first world war ended. I can remember a Singer car having a tool bag with a zip fastener supplied as part of the standard equipment before the end of world war one. I always understood that the Singer Motor Company had the exclusive use of this fastener for many years. As a motorist of long experience I should like to know where the Singer Motor Company fit into the history of the zip.

Leicester

ROBERT A. ATKINS

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT

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WHAT a rum place Parliament is! A hydrogen bomb is dropped, and Members could not behave in a more responsible and restrained fashion. Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Bevan vie with one another for the prize of statesmanship. But put about the rumour that committee rooms are being searched for hidden microphones and Mr. Lewis will have it that this is a breach of privilege and the beginnings of the police state.

The game of politics being what it is, it was not to be expected that the Socialists would not attack the Government all along the line, and therefore, agriculture and education which in more tranquil times have often been accepted as non-controversial subjects came this week under fire. No complaint could be made of that, but the manner of the Socialist attack was a little peculiar. The price review was to come out on Thursday and rumour had predicted that it would be bad for the farmers. But the Agriculture Bill had to be debated on Tuesday and Wednesday before the price review. It was rather like a *Hamlet* where the Prince of Denmark does not come on to the stage until Act V, Scene 2. The bill gave the Socialists two fair targets to shoot at—the abolition of dispossession, and higher rents. It was a little curious that the greater number of Socialist speakers, headed by Mr. Tom Williams, celebrating his seventieth birthday (of which all will wish him many happy returns) in this highly peculiar manner, should have concentrated on dispossession rather than rents. For it cannot be seriously pretended that the dispossession of some forty farmers a year can have had much effect on production. Turning people off their land is at best an unpleasant business and to lay so great an emphasis on the penal powers gave an inevitable opening to Mr. Macmillan to argue that it was apparently the Socialist contention that the increase in agricultural production came solely through the use of the big stick. Mr. Williams there did himself less than justice, but he asked for it.

It also gave an opening to Sir Thomas Dugdale. Whatever anyone may think about the rights and wrongs of Crichel Down, there is none who disputes that

Sir Thomas personally played a part of high integrity and chivalry when the storm broke. Since then he has maintained silence. He broke it this week and undoubtedly stole the debate from the Socialists. In a brave and lucid speech, speaking as he does like some infinitely gentle John Bull, he supported the Government in getting rid of dispossession but made clear his anxiety over rents. Now, the cat having been let out of the bag by so formidable a hand, it remains to be seen how much of it the Government will be able to get back again into the bag on the Committee stage.

The shadow of Torrington hung over the debate, but it was in a way the shadow of a shade. For, whatever may be the result at Torrington, it seems fairly certain that neither of the two main parties who were going at one another hammer and tongs at Westminster is likely to get much comfort out of it. Meanwhile Mr. Bowen for the Liberals took substantially the same line as Sir Thomas Dugdale, and the Liberals voted with him in the lobby.



Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd

The difference between agriculture and education is that there are a few teachers everywhere and nowhere are they a majority, whereas a constituency is either full of farmers or it has none. So Members prefer to talk about education as a technical subject and a party debate with a three-line whip does not quite click. This is what happened on Thursday. The best speeches were the least party speeches. Dr. King, as always, was good, denouncing "the cheap and screaming culture" by which the young were assailed these days—a culture which had, it seems, many faults, of which not the least was that of not reporting Parliamentary debates. But above all the show was certainly stolen by the maiden speech of Mr. McCann, the victor of Rochdale. Mr. McCann is a brave man. To begin with he plumped himself down firmly in the top seat below the gangway on the Front Opposition bench—the seat which Mr. Sydney Silverman has reserved for himself, and Mr. Silverman was reduced to a standing watch beyond the Bar. Then, when his speech warmed up, as Commander Maitland said in some admirably witty words of congratulation, he steadily edged his way towards the Front Bench proper itself. "I like a man who knows where he is going," said Commander Maitland. But apart from that it was an admirable and pleasant speech. "A comprehensive school does not necessarily mean a school where the masters are understood," he told us. Perhaps the Rochdale election has supplied the House with a new Parliamentary figure. It was the last thing that anybody expected of it.

PERCY SOMERSET



Mr. Tom Williams



Tramps, Tankers and Toffs

ADVERSITY is the finest test of character. There is one British industry which is meeting it with a typical show of bull-doggish phlegm, determination and self-confidence. It is shipping—naturally enough since it is one of the basic employments of this island race. Take, for example, the P. and O. Steam Navigation Company: its chairman, Sir William Currie, spoke the other day about the "sudden and sharp recession" which had overtaken the industry and of which he said "the end is not yet in sight." How does the company face up to this prospect? By building more ships. The last balance sheet shows that future expenditure required to complete ships ordered or under construction has gone up over the year from £39 million to £89 million. "We base our policy," says Sir William, "on the belief that shipping services, such as the group provides, will continue to be needed." That's the spirit which will keep the Red Duster flying whatever competition may come from phony Panamanian and Liberian flags of convenience.

The shipping trade, however, is one about which it is dangerous to make generalizations. The liners are still doing well. Slump or no slump, the tourists will once again be crossing the Atlantic in something like record numbers, leaving behind the rigours of their own recession. To smooth their passage the Cunard Line has now fitted both its Queens with stabilizing fins. The Australian tourist is on the move again this year. The wool cheque, which pays for so large a slice of the Australian economy, may not be as large as it has been in recent years, but it is still large enough to pay for many visits "home," and the Orient Line is doing much better business than it did last year.

The main long-term threat to the liner companies is the competition of air transport. One of the ways of beating competition, as ruling houses have found in the past, is to arrange dynastic marriages. This is being done—to wit, the P. and O.'s interest in a

number of air companies, including Silver City Airways.

The harshest blow of all has fallen on the tankers. A graph of recent movements in tanker freights looks like a cross-cut of Himalayan peaks. There is too little demand for oil and too much capacity to carry it. This, however, is a temporary phenomenon—a plateau in the rising curve in the world demand for oil products. It is significant that of the fleet now under construction for the P. and O. no fewer than fifteen ships are tankers.

Tramps are also on a bread-and-water diet. The easy times when war-time Liberty ships, bought for a proverbial song, could earn their capital cost in three or four voyages have departed. There was bound to be a boom in freights in the immediate post-war years, seeing that tens of million tons of merchant shipping had been sent to the bottom during the war. The boom was

prolonged beyond its normal span, first by the Korean war, then by the Suez affair, and by certain artificial demands from Europe—coal, for instance—which had to be satisfied by shipments across the Atlantic. These abnormalities are now disappearing, and although they are depriving parts of the shipping industry of what was a lush harvest of profit, there are wide silver linings to this particular cloud.

Shipping shares have fallen heavily and discount the slump in freight rates and most of the likely reductions in earnings. Over the past year P. and O. have come down from 38s. to 25s. 6d., Cunards from 27s. 9d. to 17s., Furness Withy from 50s. to 31s., Donaldsons from 42s. to 20s. and Stanhope from 45s. 9d. to 14s. 6d. A judicious spread of investment over these shares should pay for itself both in terms of dividend yields and ultimately of capital appreciation.

LOMBARD LANE



Forest Fires

OFF all the months in the year March has the most fiery record in British forests. The forests are inflammable because the greatest proportion of ground vegetation is dead in March or well dried by the winds of one of the less rainy months. True, there are few picnickers and campers around, but though these people do their share of mischief (together with general droppers-of-cigarette-ends) they are not in the front rank of forest fire starters. The worst offenders, in British forests, are British Railways. But there is a convenient (or fantastic) legal provision of 1905 limiting the liability of railways to £200 in respect of any one fire caused by a railway engine.

Another major cause of loss is the spreading into the forests of fires, such as moor-fires, deliberately and legally started outside. Inadequate control, carelessness, unexpected shifts of the wind—many are the reasons for costly incursions of that flaming element.

In the popular and journalistic view a common cause of fires is the rays of the sun focused through broken glass. Experiments intended to produce "accidental" broken-glass fires have been extremely unsuccessful. But from five to ten fires a year may be started by lightning. India has one record of a forest fire having been started by a spark struck from a rock rolling downhill: this should put English reporters on their imaginative-theories mettle.

Most of our forest fires are barely recognizable as such. Sometimes 25-years-old plantations are victims, but the most fire-vulnerable stage in forests is when trees are under ten years old—or even under six years. Then the ground cover is still mainly grass or heather, and the conflagration appears (to a casual onlooker) to be a heath fire.

Though the direct costs of forest fires are heavy in a bad season—which normally means a dry season—the indirect costs of precautions are in a sense a more grievous burden. Fire-breaks have to be ploughed, patrols and drills arranged, fire-towers built (and they must be manned whenever the hazard is high)—all come expensively into the picture. Nor is fire-fighting equipment cheap.

In England soil is less used for fire-dowsing than in America. Perhaps just as well. In Dorset a Boy Scout camp fire, dowsed with soil more or less according to the book, once developed after a day or two into a very nasty forest fire. The soil employed had been both dry and peaty.

J. D. U. WARD



BOOKING OFFICE

Musical Correspondence

The Literary Clef. Edward Lockspeiser. Calder, 25/-

ALTHOUGH the general arrangement of this book is somewhat ramshackle and one could have done with a few more notes and explanations, the fact remains that it is very enjoyable reading. It is an anthology of letters and writings of French composers, beginning with Berlioz and ending with Satie. In between we have Bizet, Lalo, Saint-Saëns, Chabrier, Debussy, Fauré, and Ravel.

It has long been a favourite theory of mine that musicians express themselves on paper in a special manner. It is difficult to describe exactly the characteristics of this peculiarly "musical" literary style, but of the composers gathered together in this volume only Ravel seems to me to show no sign of it. It consists in a kind of tumbling out of words, one after the other, and delight in excited verbal pictures and bright images—entirely unlike the self-conscious, measured prose of painters.

Indeed, it is the extreme liveliness of the letters that makes them such a pleasure to read. There is for example an extraordinarily funny account by Saint-Saëns of his receiving (in the company of Tchaikovsky and Grieg) a Doctorate of Music at Cambridge, *honoris causa*, in 1879. "At the head of the group of Doctors walked the King of Bhacnagar in a gold turban sparkling with fabulous jewels, and below his head a diamond necklace. I must confess that, normally hostile to the nondescript nature of our modern clothes, I was delighted with this parade." He was also much impressed with the Musical Festival at Birmingham, where they always performed *Messiah*, and later, in addition, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Saint-Saëns wrote "One shudders at the thought of a third work finding such favour with the Birmingham public."

Chabrier, full of gusto, gives an account of his visit to Spain, where he

was much troubled by the fleas, "their favoured target is the plump woman, some big lump of a lass, those enormous areas encircled by a corset big enough for a bull fight . . ." At one moment we find him in the highest of spirits, at the next in the depths of despair. His children are wonderful: his children are absolutely hopeless. "They have hardly enough brains in them for a dustman. It's heart-rending . . ."

The Debussy letters are perhaps the most interesting. Much of Debussy's life remains, as Mr. Lockspeiser points out, obscure in many of its details. Here we have some account of the birth-pangs of his one opera, *Pelléas and Mélisande*, the libretto of which was written by Maeterlinck. "I saw Maeterlinck, with whom I spent a day in Ghent. At first he assumed the airs of a young girl being introduced to her future husband, but after a time he thawed and was charming."

Debussy's married life was far from peaceful. "Gaby, with her steely eyes, found a letter in my pocket which left no doubt as to the advanced state of a love affair with all the romantic trapplings to move the most hardened heart. Whereupon—tears, drama, a real revolver and a report in the *Petit Journal*. Ah! my dear fellow, why weren't you here to help me out of this nasty mess? . . . On top of it all poor little Gaby lost her father—an occurrence which for a time straightened things out . . . Well, there you are. I am sometimes as sentimental as a modiste who might have been Chopin's mistress."

Satie, that very eccentric personality and wit (remembered for such remarks as "M. Ravel has refused the Legion of Honour, but all his music accepts it") is here less striking than might be expected. In fact he appears as a tragic figure, struggling in poverty and, ultimately, with the limitations of his own talent. However, there is an occasional characteristic sentence in his letters like "I also pointed out that I was in no way anti-Wagnerian but that we [France] should have a music of our own—if possible without any Sauerkraut."

The Literary Clef is excellently illustrated: Chabrier by Manet and also in a nice sketch by Détaille; two remarkable photographs of Debussy taken by Pierre Louys; Fauré by Sargent; Picasso's drawing of Satie; and some excellent caricatures—Berlioz by Vernet and others; Debussy by Steinlen and Sacha Guitry; with several more drawings and photographs, all admirably chosen. I recommend this anthology to everyone interested in how these famous musicians lived, even if the reader himself is not specially interested in music.

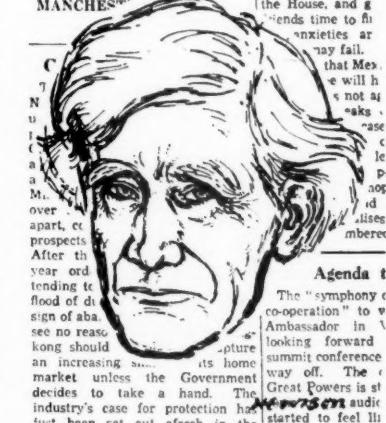
ANTHONY POWELL

Exposure

My Face for the World to See. Alfred Hayes. Gollancz, 12/6

Mr. Hayes' last novel, *In Love*, was a minor classic on the title theme; his latest, no less skilfully concentrated and even

THE GUARDIAN MANCHESTER



IX—HOWARD SPRING

Fame is the Spur! My son, My son, take wing!

These Lovers Fled Away to find the Spring.



"Aldermaston's all right, but don't you think the children would prefer the seaside at Easter?"

more compulsively readable, is necessarily more limited in its universal application: since the two anonymous protagonists—an outwardly successful member of the screen "Withers" Guild, and a failed aspirant to stardom who consoles herself with a dangerous Kafkaian persecution-fantasy—are both in their separate ways victims of Hollywood, the heartbreak city (appearing, from above, "as hell might with a good electrician"). The author is master of a new kind of suspense: one watches, as if powerless to prevent a suicide, the narrator— insecurely armoured in his worldly cynicism—approach the ambush where "love, from its shadowy retreat, bent his fatal bow." But though, out of loneliness and pity, the three disastrous irrevocable words are spoken at last, the outcome is more shattering than could possibly be expected, making this one of the most devastating indictments of the dreamfactory to appear since *The Day of the Locust*.

J. M-R.

The English Prison Hulks. W. Branch-Johnson. *Johnson*, 18/-

The catch-phrase "the good old days" needs a lot of qualification. As a study in official jobbery and humbug in Georgian and early Victorian England this history is a revelation. Started in the Thames in 1776 after the American revolt had complicated transportation, the hulks soon spread to Portsmouth and Plymouth, and survived the attacks of a few courageous reformers until 1857. The first of the five

Inquiries into their enormities described them as "convenient, airy and healthy"; in fact they were verminous, vicious, fever-ridden, soul-destroying and mostly in the hands of men allowed to starve their prisoners for their own profit, reporting rosily to keep their jobs.

The attraction of cheap labour blinded all but the most resolute investigators, such as John Howard. Improvements were made, here and there an enlightened overseer did his best, but control was remote and heavily tinted with unctuous. It is a sickening story, which Mr. Branch-Johnson hammers home.

E. O. D. K.

Jean Giraudoux: The Making of a Dramatist. Donald Inskip. *O.U.P.*, 18/-

This is not meant to be a full biography or a final assessment of the author of *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*. It is an attempt to present Giraudoux in his context and, more especially, to describe his work and life in the theatre with his friend and born interpreter, Louis Jouvet.

"The provinces," Giraudoux said once, "are my link with humanity." Professor Inskip presents him as the son of *la Province*, of that entity which is three-quarters of France and has a charm of its own, "a charm embroidered with pale flowers by serenity upon the stuff of boredom." He presents him as the brilliant classical student of the *lycée*, as the top arts student of the *École normale supérieure*, as the blossoming assistant at Harvard, as journalist, soldier and elegant diplomat; for Giraudoux, as the student of his writing knows, had as many facets as a cockchafer has eyes. Carefully the Professor analyses his major work; affectionately he discusses the partnership which was probably the most fruitful in the French theatre since Sardou and Rostand wrote for Sarah Bernhardt. He has written a penetrating and useful book.

J. R.

Leave Me Alone. David Karp. *Gollancz*, 16/-

A publisher's editor is persuaded by his family to move out of New York into a newish suburb, where he becomes worn down by compulsory neighbourliness and is involved in a campaign for starting a public library. At work he is a disciple of the doyen of American publishing, an idealist, and the conflict of culture and commerce hits the firm hard. There is a further thematic complexity: the hero is reading a study of the indifferent, conformist generation by a sociologist, and extracts from this work head the chapters.

At first the book seems like every American novel one has ever read, but it eventually picks up speed, though I cannot believe I shall remember any of it, which is odd when you consider Mr. Karp's reputation. Possibly it is filled with hints too delicate for the European reader; but the message *seems* to be that, while most people have to rub along with

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the neighbours, it is no bad thing to have a few folk with ideals here and there, provided they do not try to rush things.

R. G. G. P.

The Trianon Adventure: A Symposium. Edited by A. O. Gibbons. *Museum Press*, 21/-

The two spinsters, Miss Moberley and Miss Jourdain, who saw—or thought they saw—ghosts at Versailles at the beginning of this century, have themselves passed into legend. There can be no doubt that it is one of the best, if not the best, existing story of its kind. The present volume adds various odds and ends of evidence and some useful illustrations. Unfortunately it is inadequately indexed and scappily put together. For example, we are told by one of the contributors that in October 1928 two Englishwomen, one of whom was called Miss Burrow, had a similar experience at the Petit Trianon, and one of the plates in this book shows a drawing executed by Miss Burrow of a figure she allegedly saw on that occasion. But surely if this incident is worth mentioning at all it should be documented just as fully as the original Moberley-Jourdain episode. Obviously it is of absorbing interest in relation to the earlier story, but of scarcely any value if produced in this casual manner. However, addicts of *An Adventure* will in any case enjoy casting their eye over the volume. A. P.

The Marches of El Dorado. Michael Swan. *Cape*, 25/-

"There for me is the truth of travel, to cram the mind to bursting with the sights of the world so that the memory need never starve." Mr. Swan lived up to his own definition during his visit to British Guiana, an intelligent traveller who generously fed his memory with diverse experience—meetings with Dr. Jagan and other leaders, and three arduous journeys into the interior, culminating in his dearest ambition of climbing Roraima. The dull bits of country he jumped in an amphibious aeroplane, and then took his time in canoes and on foot, staying in Indian villages and lingering over the rich characters he found living happily in the wilds.

It was an enviable trip, and he passes on his delight in vivid and lively prose touched, in its scenic descriptions, with poetry. He came back sad at the superficial education which is destroying native crafts and drawing the Indians to the frustrations of Georgetown, and greatly impressed by the virtues of the least affected races.

E. O. D. K.

Felix Walking. Hilary Ford. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 15/-

Ostensibly a satire on Angry Young Manhood, *Felix Walking* (decorated with an attractive jacket by Heather Standing) is in fact a light sentimental comedy of a genre almost extinct. The tennis-

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playing nice-girl narrator has much in common with early Wodehouse heroines, though possessing perhaps too sharp a tongue to click with Cuthbert—or even, in the long run, with David, the dull, pleasant, pipe-smoking suburbanite whom she pursues in her spare time. For a publisher's secretary Sally delivers herself of some surprisingly sensible pronouncements on books and authors, though this particular kind of novel requires that she remain obtusely ignorant, until the end, of her true feelings towards the brash young Redbrick writer whose work she introduces to her employer (whose cantankerousness, of course, conceals a heart of gold). Felix himself is sharply alive, emerging—despite his shrewd egotism and deliberate eccentricity—as a more sympathetic figure than his many forerunners in fiction or real life, and promising well for Miss Ford's own future should she ever abandon pastiche for genuine character-drawing.

J. M-R.

Selected Writing of Gérard de Nerval.

Translated with an Introduction by Geoffrey Wagner. Owen, 25/-

Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) is perhaps chiefly known in this country for his poem *El Desdichado* ("Je suis le ténébreux,—le veuf,—l'inconsolé,") and for his exploit in pacing the gardens of the Palais-Royal with a lobster on a pale blue ribbon. Mr. Geoffrey Wagner has produced a useful volume, which not only describes Nerval's career and translates his poems but also includes his stories, which are less familiar than his verse. Although Nerval's genius was essentially for poetry rather than prose, there can be no doubt that these stories are of considerable interest. As Mr. Wagner points out in his introduction their influence on Proust can clearly be seen, even though that influence takes an indirect form. No doubt certain aspects of them can also be observed in the structure of *Le Grand Meaulnes*. It is easy to forget how original these tales were when they first appeared. In the end Nerval's eccentricities turned to loss of reason and he came to a sad end, but he left work of peculiar value. A most welcome translation.

A. P.

The Great Democracies, fourth volume of Sir Winston Churchill's History of the English-speaking Peoples (Cassell, 30/-), of which the earlier volumes were noticed in these columns, is now on sale.

AT THE PLAY*Beth (APOLLO)**The Kidder (ST. MARTIN'S)*

WHEN a major dramatist gets rid of quite an important character by pouring tea over her hat, confidence ebbs. In *Beth*, Emyl Williams takes the perfectly good theme of family responsibility, but does surprisingly

little with it; indeed, the sentiments expressed during the final solution of the play's problem might have come from a serial in the warmer kind of magazine.

The problem is Beth, so pampered by her family since a childhood illness that at sixteen she is a sly illiterate still playing with dolls. How daft is she? No one asks until her mother dies and a millionaire's son arrives to carry off her sister Lydia, the financial prop of a shabby household. This young man behaves so oddly that I expected him to be thrown in the Thames, which licked the bungalow; a fairy prince could hardly have done more than a flat in Park Lane for the prima donna aunt, a grand piano for Beth's brother, and a psychiatrist for Beth. Although a farcical figure, who discusses her patient loudly under her nose, the psychiatrist rumbles the child immediately: Beth is shamming. Then (after tea has been poured over the psychiatrist) Lydia is smitten by the thought of Beth's future and the marriage is off, though the young man, confident of a happy ending, still hangs around. And he is dead right, for the legless uncle who lives in a bath-chair tumbles out when full of whisky, and Beth is so struck by pity that she sheds her baby tricks and decides to look after him in return for lessons in the three Rs.

This very filleted version would be unfair to a better play, but Mr. Williams, who has given us such notable treats in the theatre, is off form. *Beth* has a sad air of contrivance. The child herself, though

Ann Beach plays her consistently, is merely tiresome. We cannot bring ourselves to care about any of the characters. The comic scenes are the best, but they are only trimmings, tacked on. Robert Flemyng, Irene Browne, Nan Munro and other able performers work gallantly, uphill.

Since it appeared at the Arts in November *The Kidder*, by Donald Ogden Stewart, has been re-cast except for Faith Brook and her brother Lyndon Brook, and for Dermot Walsh, who changes part; and it is now even nearer to being a good play. It is written with wit, the characters, most of them, are well drawn, and there are several strongly dramatic scenes; on the other hand it still remains difficult to determine exactly what Mr. Stewart is trying to say, he so seriously overloads his plot. Clearly this is a study of insecurity, of small-job men in America anxious in the face of rat-race competition, and at the same time of a career woman who cannot fall in love. But these issues are clouded partly by the suggestion that it is a war hangover that makes the neurotic young husband go berserk with a tommy-gun—an idea which is left in the air—partly by the staggering promiscuity of nearly everyone on the stage. As with our own angry young men the motives are anything but clear, and the author's intentions get lost among the endless manoeuvres of his amorous zoo. All the same, the play has



Powell—ROBERT FLEMYNG

Beth—ANN BEACH

(Beth)

a vitality that makes it worth seeing, and it is very capably acted, particularly by the Brooks, Betty McDowell and Dermot Walsh.

To be able to sit in my own armchair and listen at my convenience to a recording of Shakespeare is a new and delightful experience. Thanks to the Marlowe Society of Cambridge and to the British Council three plays are already available on L.P., *Othello*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *As You Like It*. Next June three more will be issued, *Richard II*, *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, and at intervals the whole of the rest of Shakespeare will thus be boxed for us. The uncut text is Dr. Dover Wilson's, and included with each play is the relevant copy of the Cambridge Pocket Shakespeare, to which the listener can refer for stage directions. The recordings are being made at the A.D.C. Theatre under George Rylands; Thurston Dart is reproducing, as nearly as possible, the original music, with such exotic assistance as hautboys, curtal and cittern.

This monumental job, in which no care is being spared, is obviously of great importance as a means of disseminating a standard spoken Shakespeare. Apart from the private pleasure it will give it should be invaluable to students, with their feet up, all over the world. But its immediate interest is the light it sheds on the old argument, whether Shakespeare goes better on the stage or in the study. Here the intention stands about half-way, to provide Shakespeare "neither read aloud nor projected across the footlights, but spoken for the listening ear"; and in spite of the Marlowe's high standard of speech I found myself confirmed as a Shakespeare-in-the-theatre man by the varying degrees in which the voices

REP SELECTION

Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow, *Of Mice and Men*, until April 5th.
Theatre Royal, Windsor, *Odd Man In*, until April 5th.
Theatre Royal, York, *The Rainmaker*, until March 29th.
Leatherhead Theatre, *The Waltz of the Toreadors*, until March 29th.

brought the characters to life. In other words, the quality of the actor can always add to full appreciation of the plays.

Anonymity being the tradition of the Marlowe, there is the extra excitement of trying to name past members now professional and the actresses brought in for female parts. Faults can be found. It sounds ungrateful to suggest that too many of the voices echo the more erudite end of a High Table, but the impression is there. Listening without the text, contrast is sometimes insufficient. Ulysses is much too emphatic, Iago older than he should have been, though extremely interesting. But in retrospect the flaws seem small beside the satisfaction of hearing Shakespeare in the

main so beautifully and so intelligently spoken.

Plays on four records cost £8. 6s. 10d., those on three £6. 5s. 3½d. But in the name of everything for which this stands, why are they not exempt from purchase tax?

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Lysistrata (Duke of York's—15/1/58) and *The Rape of the Belt* (Piccadilly—18/12/57) both torpedo the heroic idea of war. *A Touch of the Sun* (Saville—12/2/58) is good, more serious, comedy.

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

The Gift of Love
The She-Wolves

"WOMAN'S picture" or not, and even though the climax depends on something the hard-headed will refuse to accept (a Warning, to put it as unsympathetically as possible, from *Beyond the Grave*), *The Gift of Love* (Director: Jean Negulesco) is exceedingly well done, and enjoyable by anybody who can appreciate intelligent and sensitive film-making. The theme of the story it may be possible to summarize derisively, and I see that the chance to do so has been eagerly grasped by most critics, with the implication that the whole thing is no more than a glossy tear-jerker aimed at a predominantly feminine public and negligible by anyone else; but this suggestion is totally misleading. The people who can take in nothing of a film but the story, the plain what-happened-then—the people who declare that their

enjoyment is utterly spoiled if they know beforehand how the thing is going to end—may form the majority of the movie audience; but they are, by definition, the very simplest minds, and it is no use writing criticism for them.

This is about an ideally happy but childless marriage after five years of which the wife finds that she may die suddenly at any moment of a heart attack. Keeping this knowledge from her husband, she gets him to agree to adopt a small girl, with the idea that he will not be alone when she is gone. But after some time he becomes resentfully jealous of the child, who, when the wife dies, feels herself unwanted and runs away. The questionable climax involves his nick-of-time rescue of her as a result of a premonition planted in his mind by (it is understood) the spirit of his wife.

Well? If you say "That's obviously terrible," stop reading here. I'm writing for people willing to say "That doesn't sound hopeful, but what is the film like?"

I repeat, it's exceedingly well done, and therefore enjoyable. There is an adult atmosphere about it. The wife (Lauren Bacall) and the husband (Robert Stack) are not specially striking characters, but they are excellent played. He meets her first when he is consulting her doctor boss about lack of sleep, and he does genuinely suggest a man who has been awake for three nights; later (he is a dedicated scientist) we find it perfectly believable that he should be so fascinated by his work that he doesn't hear anything. Similarly his literal-minded irritation with the fancies of the child (Evelyn Rudie—very good, too), and the wife's efforts to reconcile them, are made admirably convincing.



Hitty—EVELYN RUDIE

[*The Gift of Love*]

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Every moment is enriched, given depth, made to strike and hold the attention, charm or amuse or surprise, with careful well-observed detail, and there are splendid visual effects. I didn't find it a tear-jerker, in the sense of being moving, at all; nor do I say it's great or important. But it gave me a good deal of pleasure.

Les Louves, or *The She-Wolves* (Director: Luis Saslavsky) is another of those ruthless French ones, by the same authors (Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac) as *Les Diaboliques*. It is a rougher, harsher, cruder piece, not at all as well made (and, it seems to me, progressively less well made from the beginning onwards), but perpetually interesting and, in its grim way, gripping. Two French prisoners of war escape together; one is killed, and the other, knowing all about him, assumes his identity, and eventually marries his "marraine" or pen-friend. Impossible without making it seem forced to summarize all that leads up to the climax, which has a dreadful inevitability and finality and just about wipes out the last of the main characters, but the motives, warped though they are, are made understandable and—given these characters—credible. The piece is worth seeing for its skilful use of the simplest visual and auditory effects to establish and build atmosphere, the economy of its characterization—particularly, as I say, at first. As the demands of the inexorable plot get more insistent, one notices that the narrative is too often advanced by the device of causing some significant words to be overheard or some significant event to be seen by someone round the corner.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Dunkirk has arrived in London, but the Swedish *The Seventh Seal* (19/3/58) is more impressive and haunting with a fraction of the means. *The Picasso Mystery* (29/1/58) is in its last days. *The Tall Stranger* is quite a good Western, which would be twice as good if they hadn't roughly chopped ten minutes out to make it "U" instead of "A" and allow of its being stuffed into a double-feature with *The Golden Disc* (with Terry Dene), an important slice of the paying audience for which will be under sixteen. The very funny *Femmes de Paris* ("Survey," 12/2/58) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) continue.

Best release: *Wild is the Wind* (12/3/58)—well done altogether, and Anna Magnani splendid. *The Silent Enemy* (19/3/58) is an account of Crabb and the frogmen—don't get it mixed up with last month's release *The Enemy Below* (22/1/58), also about a war-time naval occasion, but a real story with characters in it.

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Whereunto it hath pleased God . . .

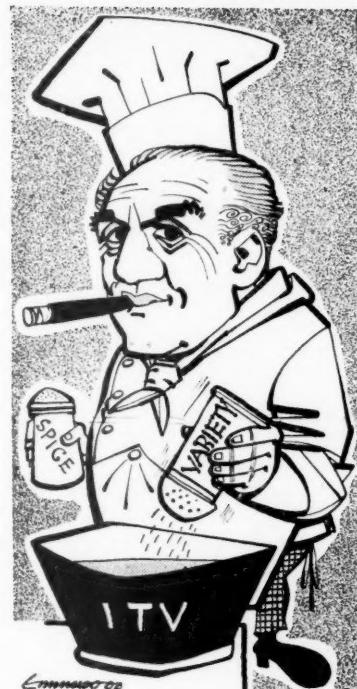
OMINOUS indeed is the tale that B.B.C. television is beginning to win back adherents from Another Channel. No one with his finger on the public pulse will accept that this means a miraculous swing among the viewers to a less unambitious outlook; they can only conclude that it is the result of the Corporation's lowering its intellectual standard until its programmes touch the general comic-strip level of the opposition. What's more, this is an accusation its directors will have to fight hard to refute while the massacre of the Third Programme is fresh in our memories.

Myself, I don't understand why the B.B.C. should worry about viewing figures at all. They have no advertisers to think of; it costs no more for them to put out a high-class programme with low appeal than a programme as silly as "This Is Your Life" (still, for the record, the silliest and nastiest on the screen since "People Are Funny" was put down). The Government is hardly likely to tell General Jacob that if his figures don't improve it will take his monopoly away. Yet the ghost of the popularity poll hovers tangibly, and lethally, over so much that they do.

Example: "The Critics" have held their Sunday spot as long as living memory can reach. The programme has faults, but it is uncompromisingly intellectual. Yet when television tries the same sort of thing—"Monitor," alternate Sundays at ten—it has to be baited with interviews and scrappy little bits of film and background music until it looks like a highbrow's nightmare of "In Town To-night" and conveys no feeling at all of being in touch with contemporary arts.

Another example: even the Home allows us a few symphony concerts each week, sometimes with music in them by hard composers like Bartók, Messiaen and Hindemith. But when The Box gives its rare classical offerings, usually at a Tchaikovsky B minor level, it tricks them out with such a panning and tracking from 'cellos to oboes, fiddles to flutes, bassoons to baton, that the viewer has hardly a shred of attention left for the sound.

Couldn't the B.B.C. keep its nose in the air and leave the mass-viewing to the firms that need it to pay for their programmes? No one can tell me that a home able to call on "Mark Saber," "Beat the Clock," "Double Your Money," "Take Your Pick," "Cool for Cats," "Tell the Truth," "Cheyenne" and "The Jack Jackson Show" would be much poorer if it had to do without "What's My Line?" "This Is Your Life," "The Best Of Benny," "I Married Joan," "Six-Five Special" and "Wells Fargo." (It has to do without half of them anyway, unless it owns two sets.) It's not that there's anything basically wrong with any of these shows, except those I have marked



SIDNEY BERNSTEIN

with an asterisk*; but if it is to deserve well of the community a nation-wide entertainment industry ought to think about something beyond the number of addicts it can entice with its supplies of electronic marijuana.

If I were a defeatist I might suggest that the flight from Channel Nine originated with Mr. Bernstein and his Granada organization; for wherever you come across an oasis of uplift in the independent programmes the odds are it's a Granada production. (One notable exception is ATV's admirable "Is Art Necessary?" series, starring Sir Kenneth Clark.) "Criss-Cross Quiz," "Chelsea at Nine," "What the Papers Say," "Youth Wants to Know"—Mr. Bernstein lurks behind them all. Not, by the way, that you would learn this from the *TV Times*. In the programme pages last week this gave twenty-nine credits to Associated-Rediffusion, sixteen for ATV and none for Granada; but then the *TV Times* is published by Associated-Rediffusion.

I am happy to say, however, that there is little sign of the public deserting Mr. Bernstein. Lest anyone should suggest that this does after all indicate a rise in the standard of public taste it is only fair to say that a check on what the B.B.C. counters the Granada attractions with does not suggest that Mr. Bernstein has been seriously extended yet.

B. A. YOUNG

* On second thoughts I think I will leave readers to insert their own asterisks.

FOR
WOMEN



Day-Old Chic

NEWLY hatched in good time for Easter, the spring fashions are just beginning to flutter out into the sunshine on the pavements. Not for many a spring has there been such a difference between the new hatchings and last year's carried forward. To-day's spring chic is a leggy chic, with a gangling, ugly elegance which is endearing in the young but rather rangy in their elders.

It is by no means a uniform chic; but its many manifestations are all quickened by the time-spirit of 1958, which endows them with certain common characteristics. The silhouette, for instance, tends always to be flat in front—even slightly concave—while the back is convex, with pleats or draping curving out from the shoulders. The shroud (for such it often seems) ignores the bust and the waist, gives a gentle passing embrace to the hips, and comes to an abrupt conclusion at the knee. This, the knee, is made the focal point by various means: by straightforward means, such as a tapering skirt; by subtle means, such as harem draping at the hem; by sinister means, such as gathering the skirt in to a tight band or to a hem-line bow.

Every fashion-conscious woman, say the hosiery statisticians, will this spring show 130 square inches more of her legs: if they are too square then that is just too sad. Moreover, if the stocking stylists have their whimsical way, her nylons will have the hint of a tint of green, blue, violet, or some other delicate shade to tone with her clothes. Her shoes will also be delicately shaded, whether they be calf, kid, or suède; or



they will be made of printed fabrics, or of pastel linen.

All this favours young long limbs and does great disservice to the middle-aged and middle-weight. Two other features make it a young woman's year: the bijou-chest and the cropped-off shortness of jackets and sleeves, which gives an almost grown-out-of appearance. Ingénueism is still further exploited, both in Paris and in London, by schoolgirl jumper tops over very short pleated skirts, worn with unsophisticated Breton hats. Coincident is the unanimous election this season of three happy young men as the darlings of Paris *couture*: Pierre Cardin, Guy Laroche, and Yves

St. Laurent, the successor to Christian Dior. Impudence has got the edge on dignity; Cardin and Laroche have teased, tweaked, and given fresh twists to the sack, the sheath, the chemise, the spindle, the beetle, the bell, and the cocoon; and St. Laurent has daringly launched out on an altogether new line, the trapeze.

The trapeze, which is geometrically described as a triangle chopped off at its apex, is not here yet; but it will soon be arriving in top shops at top prices. Christian Dior's London ready-to-wear house shows all this month to stores' buyers. Of the seventy-five models in the Collection there are four which the buyers never miss; and these are all clear-cut manifestations of the trapeze line. First, *Decision*, which might almost be called the prototype. It is a black afternoon dress of organza-laine which will retail at about 64 guineas. It buttons all down the back; the front is absolutely

plain from its high, collarless neckline to the hem—except for a small satin bow, placed reverently on the diaphragm as a wreath might be placed on a cenotaph. It is the many invisible seamings, the underlying mystifications of structure which make this stark garment look so superbly expensive, so outrageously chic.

The model second in demand is *Vesinet*, a 48-guinea beige lace-tweed day dress. This is a belted trapeze, the bodice softly bloused over a considerable belt. Then there is *Aventure*, a minutely checked soft wool dress. This has a bodice which, hanging straight and loose to the waist, looks like a separate back-fastening bolero or *visite*, but is in fact a built-in part of the dress. Placed fourth in buyer-appeal is a slubbed repp dress and jacket. The dress has a built-in *visite* and a trapeze skirt; over this goes a straight cropped jacket with three-quarter sleeves and stand-away collar.

One doubts, indeed, that the trapeze can ever become a successful inexpensive fashion. But if the trapeze itself proves to be the wholesalers' Waterloo, there are many things *chez* Dior which we shall soon be seeing elsewhere. Look out for the *visite*, the stand-away collars or collarless necklines, the cropped short sleeves, the back-buttoning. Look out for very soft woollens and feather-light tweeds in very soft neutral colours. Look out for linen suits with box-pleated skirts, for bulky loose-backed top-coats. Look for flames, apricots, tangerines; for beige, white, and sand. Look out for waterfalls of beads and for long, long trails of single pearls or beads. Look for flowered or chiffon cocktail cloches and for big crowned hats, down-drooping at the brim. Look out for long gloves in pastel kid or nylon simplex, and for low-vamped shoes with bows and buckles. Look out for legs—well, no need to *look* for legs. We shall be seeing them to the knee, whether we like them or not.

ALISON ADBURGHAM

Ravelled Sleeve

SCRAP that cumbersome old knitting-machine, wives and mothers! Knit the modern way, *with the bare hands!* Buy one of those ingenious sausage-bags with a zip to catch the wool in, look for the amazing row-counting gadget now reaching the shops, and integrate your knitting with the busy life of the modern woman!

Here to begin with is a simple pattern.

A JUMPER FOR WARMER DAYS

FRONT

Casting On. Choose one of these methods:

- (a) Unmake bed, surround with shoes, budgies, recorders, galley proofs, dead hats. Take hank 5-ply khaki wool, *without winding*, chuck a likely number of sts. on any two odd needles, K 1, P 1 till telephone rings,* shove in drawer, leave 6 months.
- (b) Make all beds, dust, sweep, cook, re-cover sofa, make handy firebox. Wind wool, sit down, look at clock, come to senses. Repeat from*.

19th Row, i.e. $\frac{1}{4}$ in. up rib and getting sooty. K 1, P 1 for 7 rows, pausing to give date Armada and laugh antics cloth spaceman, continue to $\frac{1}{2}$ way next row, see U.S.A.F. hutments flying past window, realize train due seaside any minute, do not K to end of row but merely drop needle, stand on wool.

38th Row, i.e. row-counter now fixed. With approach of winter and end of rib, wait till fireside evening when husband and friend are discussing a TV star you've never heard of, and get cracking with a bovine half-smile to indicate you're not intellectually up to the talk. This is of course the only talk a modern woman isn't intellectually up to, so make the most of it.

55th Row. Test for non-shrink properties by washing where wool got fried—along with the no-trouble *palla chihuahua* you were stirring miserably for your simple little dinner.

60th Row. Open handbag, look furtively round B.B.C. studio where are waiting voice-test Woman's Hour talk "Heligoland Holiday," decide as have been abandoned 90 minutes can risk it. Take out knitting, get caught in act of pulling off wine gums.

53rd Row. Unpick another 5, reflect on (a) breadth modern education trends, (b) how in hell *do* you teach knitting to a left-handed boy?

54th Row. *K to end of row, P next row, rep from * 1018 times, cast off neck, rise, join fellow-passengers for plane.

BACK

Casting On. Fewer stitches than front as now are knitting the thing for a friend's child in compensation taking bookshelves (own) off friend who on returning from F.O. job abroad must let house so as to pay to live. Child growing fast, remember.

35th Row. Being now on treadmill with deadline, why not learn to read and knit together? Choose for double profit some book you would not otherwise have got near, e.g. 1,000-pager American Civil War, Renaissance, Resistance, Howard Spring. P 1, glance 1st sentence, rep. pattern, rep. glance. Drop knitting, seize book, tear meaning from word-tangle with gritted teeth. Rep. process for 1st 4 pages, roll knitting neatly, place drawer.

214th Page. Persuade husband to start book, return to household duties, buy friend's child latest synthetic twin-set, buy self do., divide wool among family for pea-sticks, egg-cosies, toy harness and just winding round the garden.

ANGELA MILNE

New for Women

REALM or Day,
Which is the one?
Each the newest finest weekly
Under the sun,
Both so rich beyond compare
In the art of home and beauty care,
Which *do* I buy,
Realm or Day?

Day and Realm,
Swept by the tide of you,
I forgot which has Lady Barnett,
Darn it, inside of you;
Even which of you it is
Has the blouse,
The 64 colour pages,
The Special Offers,
The Things that Matter,
The regular Candy recipes —
Day or Realm,
Realm or Day?

ANDE



"A BOX FOR THE FIRST NIGHT
Or any night . . . it's bound to be B—a
—the *prima* chocolates with a repertoire of
fifteen succulent centres, designed and produced . . . for your exclusive enjoyment . . .
The curtain rises—there is a slight rustle in
the audience (someone popping a B—a
Chocolate in her mouth!) An unforgettable evening . . ."
Advertisement in Tatler
Thanks to that guzzling female and her goddam chocolates.



"But I'm not allowed out after eleven."

Toby Competitions

No. 9—Do It Yourself

COMPETITORS are invited to choose one of the captions set out below, and invent and describe (in not more than a hundred words) an appropriate setting for it, with all necessary "props" and characters. No actual drawing is required: for the purpose of the report on the competition the winning suggestion will be drawn, from the description given, by a *Punch* artist.

"Perhaps in future you'll leave things alone!"

"Good morning. Can I be of any assistance?"

"Darling, there's something I think you ought to know."

"There'll be questions asked about this, I'm afraid."

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive Toby bookmarks. Entries (any number, but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Thursday, April 3, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 9, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 6

Competitors were asked to suggest a situation, future or contemporary, which they felt would gradually be added to the list of joke-drawing clichés. There were some lively prophecies, with space-travel providing the most fruitful source. Other

subjects were robots, missile bases, road-worthiness tests, Zeta, popular archaeology, clover-leaf junctions, protest marches, and spin dryers. It was perhaps a reflection of the times that a large proportion of the suggestions dealt with the more gruesome possibilities of life in the future: there was more than a hint of hollow laughter amid the ruins of civilization. The prize was awarded to:

ERIC EDWARDS
25 WETSTONE LANE
WEST KIRBY
WIRRAL

for the following entry:

A forthcoming cartoon idea will concern two- or four-seater helicopter owners, with a future Brockbank illustrating

Heliport attendants stacking the machines one on top of the other like muffins on a plate;

Lady helicopterists giving the "I am descending" signal and then elevating;

Owners taking off before opening the garage roof;

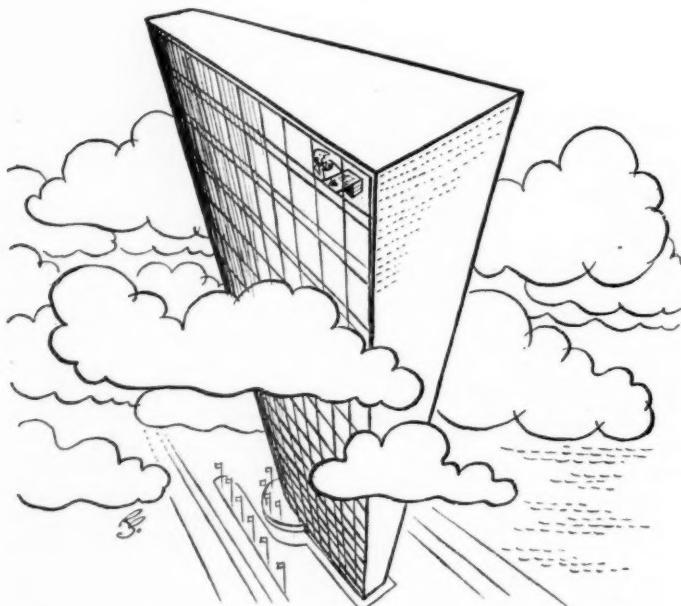
Owners forgetting to tether the machine after alighting;

Cod "cloud reports" on the latest machine, with graphical rise and fall rate; "Drop in on us any time" sort of joke;

Gaol escapes, with manacled hands giving signals;

Helicopters among angels on clouds.

Mrs. M. G. Lloyd, Homeleigh, Park Place, Newbridge, Mon. submitted the best of the "horror" suggestions, as follows:



"U.N. Outer Space Control Section speaking . . ."

Radioactive Food

Sooner or later, whatever sane resolutions we have made, we must learn to laugh at the stuff. So let us have an Anti-radioactive Food Fanatic. He is a limp man, with too little strengthening strontium in his bones. Many of his absurdities are horticultural ones—for instance, he protects his turnips with umbrellas. He stands at the door of his butcher's shop studying a relative-radioactivity map of the earth. As a bridegroom he tests his wedding-cake with a geiger counter. As a parson (with acknowledgments to *Punch*) he describes his boiled egg as "Radioactive in parts."

T. Madden, 13 Pennsylvania Road, Liverpool 13, was more light-hearted:

A future subject will be the TV 'phone. This will become known as the Tellyphone Joke, so in all seriousness we may as well face it. Already I can see comic faces peering from the 'phone screen at "Gone to Lunch" and "See You Later" notices propped up on office tables. Then of course there'll be the tired business man tellyphoning his wife to say he's detained at the office, forgetting that his wife can see the blonde secretary on his knee, etc.

Dr. J. M. Crawford, Norlands, Stonehill Road, Chertsey, offered some hair-raising captions about the effects of nuclear radiation, which might have appealed to Swift: but we forbear to print them.

Weather Control drew a few entries; the best came from Mrs. M. H. Hughes, 23 Cherry Garden Lane, Folkestone, Kent:

There would be "Weather Intention" Reports, Weather Zones, Pest Danger Zones, Famine, Flood and Coastal or Geological Crumbling Zones, Holiday Zones, and Work Zones with their latest "Weather Defences." Judges would give judgment on Natural and Unnatural Weather. A Ministry of Weather Restriction would be formed. "Weather Satisfaction" taxes would be levied . . .

Flt.-Lt. J. S. Eeles, "Kia-Mia," Main Road, Cavendish, Suffolk, on the subject of life in space, asked us to

consider the space-shipwrecked couple drifting in the void. The technical difficulties of hoisting panties to signal passingspace-ships may be insurmountable, but the hapless female pursued in zero gravity and a frustrating space-suit offers classical opportunities to the humorist.

We leave the humorists to make whatever notes they wish for the future.

Toby bookmarks will be sent to all competitors quoted above, and to the following: Michael Birt, Stone House, Staunton-on-Wye, Herefordshire; J. Howard-Scott, The Towers, Churchwell, Leeds; R. C. Hinton, Pembroke College, Cambridge; Lieut. Justus A. Muller, H.Q. AFSOUTH, Box 9, Naples, Italy; Mrs. G. D. K. Murray, Borgie House, Castleton, Caithness; J. P. Pinel, 67 Horn Park Lane, London S.E.12; Roger Till, 14 Western Hill, Durham; G. S. Whittet, Flat 2, 62 Thrale Road, London S.W.16.



I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK

The first instalment of a new story

By ALAN HACKNEY

THE hot sun beat down on Sunny-glades Nature Camp, and Stanley Windrush gulped at the gates. Whenever he came to see his father it seemed to be hot. Had it only been cooler he could have got away with it, but in weather like this he knew beforehand, with a sinking heart, that Mr. Habakkuk in the reception room would insist on his being naked like everyone else.

"I don't think your father's in his cabin," said Mr. Habakkuk, "he's in the grounds somewhere. Let me know if you can't find him."

Cringing distractedly along the paths he began to beat the woods. Twice he turned back at warning notices: *DANGER! Beyond this point you can be seen from the road.* He found his naked father at last, mushrooming near the lake with a little chip basket.

"Seen any *amanitopsis vaginata*?" his father called out as he approached. "Oh, it's you, Stanley. How are you? Any trouble with your trains? I'm looking for grisettes."

"Oh, I'm very well," said Stanley uneasily. His father's remarks unsettled him with their apparently medical or perhaps Parisian flavour, but it became clear he was speaking of fungi.

Later, outside Mr. Windrush's hut, they set to work peeling for cooking.

"And what are you thinking of doing now?" his father asked casually.

This was not an easy question to answer. Thinking of an answer had taxed Stanley's capacities through most of his last term at the university. What with the long interlude of his Army service and one thing and another, it seemed to him at times that he had been at Oxford, on and off, for most of his life.

Stanley had, in fact, fallen for Oxford's notorious illusion of timelessness, and was now alarmed to realize that after *this* vacation he would not be going back. With his third-class in the Final Honours School of English slung on his shoulder he must now strike out unassisted along

what the chaplain at school used to call Life's Highway.

"Lots of young fellows seem to be going in for the Foreign Office," said his father. "Quite a shortage of recruits of the right sort. Seems to be a lot easier than it was in my day."

"I suppose the usual thing is to stay at home for a bit and look round, but you never seem keen to stay here very long somehow. Would you get the tomatoes? They're inside, in a bowl covered with *Health and Efficiency*."

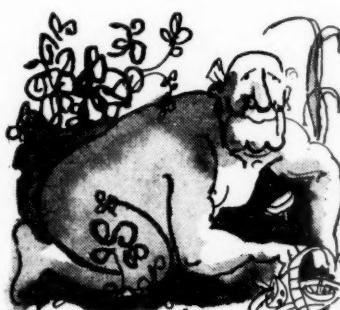
Inside the hut there was a minimum of basic furniture, indeed hardly enough horizontal surfaces to support the objects that had accumulated to bear witness to Mr. Windrush's multitudinous interests. Some of the more solid of the objects were usefully employed as paper-weights, for he tended to keep the windows open day and night.

Parts of his abandoned manuscript on the history of the English music-hall were thus pinned down, as were pages of his current manuscript "*The Uncluttered Spirit*," an assessment of the contribution of nudity to culture through the ages—a project started some years before as a thank-offering, but now largely abandoned through lack of evidence. Mr. Windrush was a sensible man in his eccentricities and would never hesitate from mere pride to lay aside anything that became unpromising. Thus, his maritime rug-wool sweater hung ready to hand behind the door for when the sun went in. If it became chillier, he put shorts on as well.

Stanley came out with the tomatoes to find his father cutting a big puff-ball into half-inch slices.

"You know," said Mr. Windrush, "these Socialists talk about the Foreign Office being one of the last outposts of privilege. At least, they used to. I'm personally all for any of these last outposts. Why not have a shot at that? You might do well in it."

"I do know some people going in for it," admitted Stanley. "Two or three chaps with Firsts, and a lot of Roman



Catholics. They get in all right. They send them to Paris or Rio."

"Well, you once did a course in Japanese, didn't you?" said his father. "That's almost as good. They'd probably send you to the Canary Islands. I should put in an application right away."

Stanley was rushed to hospital the next day, and spent a fortnight recovering from the effects of his father's fungus casserole. He was pleased to receive a letter from him during the final stages of his recovery.

MY DEAR STANLEY,
—I really must apologize for the delay in writing to you. I was, of course, informed by the hospital authorities of your condition and they assured me verbally that although you were then on the danger list you were in the most capable hands, which relieved me a great deal.

It is curious to note that I personally suffered no ill-effects and I can only put down your indisposition to the accidental inclusion of some *amanita phalloides*, a variety often noted for its fatal effect. My survival I must chiefly ascribe to robustness induced by more natural living conditions, but I do not wish to preach.

The last ten days have been pretty full, with the annual conference of Natural Union, which was held here this year. We have our excitements, you see.

Let me know how your Foreign Office application is going. Mr. Habakkuk's nephew is with the Fiji Police, incidentally, and often sends back interesting evidence on the effects of clothing a barbarous people.

My best wishes for your recovery.

Your affectionate

FATHER

The day after this there came application forms and duplicated sheets of information about appointments in the Senior Branch of the Foreign Service.

"Civil Service Commission," said Stanley to the taxi-driver.

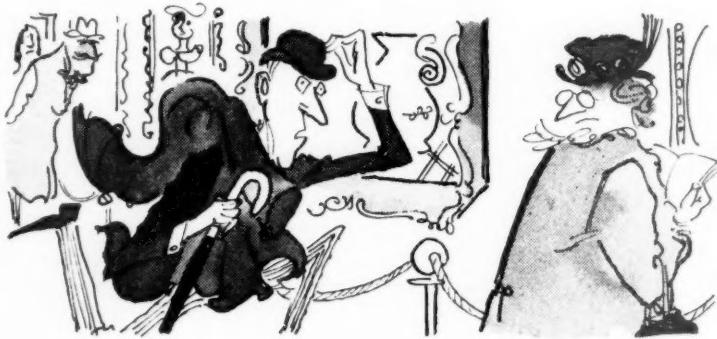
Candidates for interview were asked to be a quarter of an hour early, but Stanley disliked waiting about and had allocated most of this quarter hour to the taxi ride from Victoria. As they waited in dense traffic at Hyde Park

Corner he realized the foolishness of this.

"You in any particular hurry, mate?" asked the driver through his glass slide. He could see Stanley in his mirror, shifting anxiously about and craning round to look at public clocks.

"Yes, as a matter of fact I'm going to be terribly late," said Stanley.

"So's every other perisher, by the look of it," pointed out the driver. "Gibback



dair!" He humped the vehicle a foot obliquely forward as a car tried to nose into his lane.

"I think I'd better . . ." began Stanley desperately, leaning forward, but a sudden spurt heaved him back into his seat.

"Can't you possibly go some other way?" asked Stanley, as they began to edge at less than walking pace along Piccadilly.

"You want a helicopter, *you do*," said the driver. "Whynchoo say so?"

Stanley reached for the door handle, but the taxi suddenly plunged forward, coming to a stop outside the Royal Academy. A tight immovable column of vehicles stretched ahead of them to the Circus.

Stanley jumped out and paid the driver.

"Suit yourself, mate," said the driver. "It's only just round the block. Why don't you nip straight through the Academy? It's the same building, only the other side."

In a fever, Stanley ran through the courtyard of the Academy and in through the front doors.

"Ticket, sir?"

There was an exhibition on. Agonized, Stanley calculated the time for rushing out again and round the block. It was quicker to press on through the building.

In tremendous haste he bought a ticket, was let in, and began an irrationally fast walk, winding his way through viewers towards the rear of the building. He found the great bronze doors, yanked one of them open, and arrived, significantly through the back door, to try for his Civil Service career.

"Mr. Windrush?" said a messenger. "We've been on the look-out for you. Upstairs for your Board, please."

Up the marble stairs on the first floor a group of young men sat waiting with the composure of death on them. They looked at Stanley, who straightened his clothing while the messenger went in to announce him.

"Go in now, sir," said the messenger, and then followed him in to call loudly: "Mr. Windrush."

Stanley sank exhausted into the candidate's chair.

"Mr. Windrush?"

This must be the First Commissioner, across the room at the farthest point from Stanley of a great horseshoe table. There were eight, or perhaps nine, including two women.

"Yes, sir, good morning," said Stanley, shifting on his chair. There was a little table in front of him, and a notice propped up on it. It said, tersely, "SPEAK UP."

"I beg your pardon?" said the First Commissioner.

"Good morning, sir," said Stanley, a little too loudly, so that it echoed.

"M'm, good morning," the Chairman repeated in an indifferent tone, looking through his papers.

None of the Board looked at all enthusiastic at having been kept waiting.

"Now," began the Chairman, and at the word all the interviewers bent forward to their duplicated files, for all the world as if starting a game of housey-housey.

"Full name Stanley Clive Oliver Windrush British by birth," read the Chairman rapidly. "Father Charles Windrush occupation independent means and your mother is deceased."

"Yes, sir."

All the Board looked up briefly as if

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to check that Stanley was still with them. Stanley wondered if "sir" would really do to include the women, and flashed the two of them a nervous smile. One of them nodded a little severely and the other did not react at all.

"You were at Spaniels School, I see," the Chairman went on, "and then at Apocalypse College, Oxford."

Stanley changed his position, trying to slither unobtrusively more upright.

"Then you went into the Army and you did a Japanese course. Then you went back to Oxford and in due course finished your time there, and you got a Third in English."

Put like that it sounded much like aimless wandering. Stanley wondered if he could think of some remark to make it all sound more impressive. He couldn't.

"Er—yes," he said.

The Board all looked at him.

"Can you tell us, Mr. Windrush, something of what you have been doing since then?"

"Yes," said Stanley, with a show of confidence, "I can. It hasn't been very long, of course, but I haven't been idle. I've been at—home, with my father, reading a good deal on the world situation."

"You've been reading up on the world situation, Mr. Windrush," repeated the Chairman with faint distaste for the phrase.

"The American Presidential Election looks interesting, doesn't it?"

"Oh, I do agree, it does," said Stanley.

"What strike you as being some of its more interesting features, Mr. Windrush?"

"Well." Stanley paused as if to give this weighty thought, but found it difficult to keep the pose.

"Our situation here in relation to their situation there," he improvised. "That's very vital. We all know what a shortage of dollars means, don't we? If it results in a shortage of dollars it will be very serious for us."

"Mr. Windrush," said the Chairman, "perhaps if you were to explain how the Presidential Election might result in a dollar shortage . . . ?"

"That's one of the difficult things to

see in this situation," said Stanley. "The two don't seem at first sight to be connected, but . . ." But what? "Let me put it this way," he plunged on, "if this country is short of dollars we can't buy from America, and we must buy from somewhere else."

"And why couldn't we?"

"If we had to," said Stanley, "if we were faced with that, well . . . we could."

"Perhaps someone else would like to ask a question," said the Chairman restlessly, looking round. "Would you like to start, Mr. H'm—m'm?"

A man somewhere to Stanley's left began to ask in a low tone: "Mr. Windrush, do you consider family ties are more important than your work, or do you think one's work is more important in all circumstances?"

"Oh, yes," said Stanley. "Yes, I think one's work is jolly important, especially if it's—important work. Much more important than one's family."

"Do you think, Mr. Windrush," put in one of the women, "that the decay in family life to-day is not important?"

"Oh good gracious no," cried Stanley. "I think family life is terribly important. I think everybody ought to have a family, for instance."

"Oh," said the woman, now a little huffy. "You know of course that women in the Foreign Office *must* be unmarried?"



There was a short silence, and then a man on the other side cleared his throat and said: "How would you assess your Japanese? Fluent?"

"Oh—er—tolerably."

"Oto san wa ikaga de gozaimasu?"¹

"O kage san de tassha de gozaimasu."²

"Speak up," said the Chairman, curious to hear the peculiar fluting tones of this reply again.

"Sorry," said Stanley, and with

¹ How is your father?

² He is very well, thank you.

musical emphasis repeated: "*O kage san de tassha de gozaimasu.*"

"Thank you, Mr. Windrush," said the Chairman. "That will be all."

As soon as he had left there was a deep silence. The Chairman shook his head, expelling his breath.

"I must point out we're terribly short of Japanese specialists," said the man who had asked the last question.

The Chairman gave a very deep sigh.

"We-e-ell . . ." he said at last, in profound distaste.

When notification of his success came through Stanley paid his four pounds for a Civil Service stamp at the post office and his certificate of qualification was filed by the Civil Service Commissioners (as is their practice) in one of their basements. A few days later his letter of appointment arrived, and having made no other arrangements, Stanley wrote to his aunts, the Misses Dorothy and Mildred Tracepurcel, at their Eaton Square address. This letter brought no reply of any sort.

When Stanley had booked in at his temporary hotel he discovered that it was twenty-five past three. Anyone faced with this time in London goes out, and Stanley was by no means an exceptional person.

Once out of the door he began walking in the rough direction of Eaton Square, mildly curious about the fate of his mother's aunts. It was fairly obvious that they must be dead.

There were three bells to the Eaton Square house, and to Stanley's incredulity the card by the bottom one read "Tracepurcel." He pressed the bell.

When the door was answered it opened thirty degrees and clunked against some obstruction inside. The top half of a brawny old lady leaned out round it.

"Good afternoon," said Stanley. "Miss Tracepurcel?"

"Yes?"

"My name's Stanley Windrush," said Stanley. "I think I'm—"

"Wait!" cried the woman, clapping a hand to her forehead and shutting her eyes tightly for some seconds, muttering.

"Constance's boy, of course," she said, opening them. "Squeeze in."

Stanley edged through the opening and then round the bath-chair which was obstructing the door.

"Very pleasant to meet you," said the old lady, pumping his hand vigorously.
"You've come to tea, I take it?"

"Oh, you were expecting me, then?"

"No, no, of course not. Why should you think that?" She hitched up her tweed skirt with masculine movements and marched off, Stanley following.

"Actually, I wrote you both a letter," said Stanley. "At least, I presume it is 'both'?"

The great-aunt stopped and faced him.

"Both?" she repeated. "Of course. You didn't think that was *my* bath-chair in the hall? I'm seventy-four but I don't need one of *those*, thank you. Come along." They entered a room and she called energetically: "Dolly! A visitor. He says he thinks he's Constance's boy, Stanley."

Another, but more delicate, old lady, sitting reading, took off her glasses, smiled, and said "Goodness, how nice. Come and let me see you better. We don't see any young people nowadays."

A group of small dogs and Siamese cats round her rose, stretched, and rearranged themselves.

"I'll make the tea," said Great-Aunt Mildred. "I'll muck out the budgies later."

Great-Aunt Dolly had known a

number of important people in the Edwardian period . . . Her parents had objected violently to her leaving their Norfolk house and coming to London to go on the stage. They were quite right in this, as it happened, for she quickly descended to the company of the highest circles in the land. She did not marry, but produced one child whom

walked a lot, kept fit at a ladies' gymnasium, and birds in the house.

Dolly's mysterious annuity, Mildred's money from her parents' will, and the income from the other two maisonettes kept the two sisters in reasonable style.

"Well, I was saying," said Stanley, some time later, "I'm going to be at the Foreign Office."

"Where will you live, Stanley?" asked Great-Aunt Dolly.

"Oh, I've an hotel to start with," said Stanley.

"That's far too expensive," said Dolly definitely. "Live cheaply and eat expensively's the right approach. Why not live here?"

"Good idea," said Great-Aunt Mildred. "Can you do painting?"

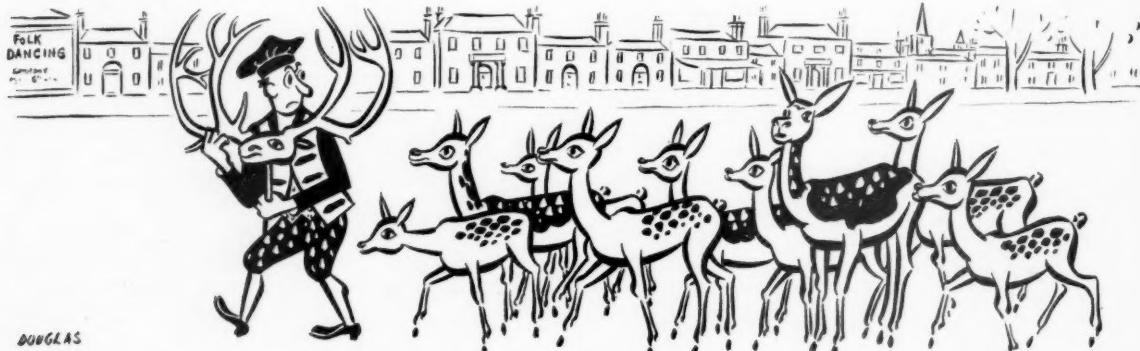
"Well, that's really very kind," said Stanley. "Just till I find somewhere, if you really have room."

"Both the bathrooms need doing," said Mildred. "That'd keep you active. They're peeling."

So Stanley cancelled his booking at the hotel and moved into Eaton Square,

dutifully filling in a buff Change of Address form issued by the Civil Service Commission. He left this, with other letters to be posted, on the hall table, and later one of the dogs selected it from the pile and chewed it for some time experimentally. Aunt Dolly picked it up from the sitting-room hearthrug, saw that it was buff and bureaucratic, and threw it in the kitchen bin.

(To be continued)



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